

spare Rib

No.13 20p
July 1973

*The point is to
change it..*

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relationships

Working without a
boss

Seeing the right sort
of doctor

Understanding
your sexuality

Do-It-Yourself
divorce

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Nazi sex symbol

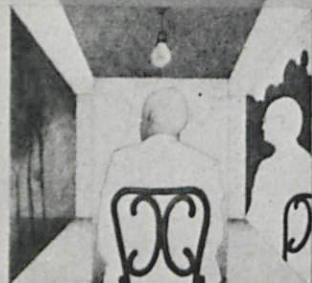
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of The Feminine
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IN OUR OWN WRITE.

Dear Spare Rib:

In reply to the letter from Mrs Kolthammer of New Malden you printed in May Spare Rib. I am a 42-year-old teacher who divorced her husband almost two years ago. It took until October 1972 to get all matters regarding the house and so on settled, and several times I felt that I was being discriminated against. Even now, as I write, I am waiting for the local borough to pass judgement on my 15-year old boy, my third son, who is completely turned off school. He maintains the Headmaster is prejudiced against him because he comes from a broken family. Howevermuch I try to keep my sense of proportion, the Head's attitude to me (a colleague) was perhaps summed up in our last interview when he said, quite wrongly as it happens, that I love a fight and my husband couldn't take any more and went off. The basic assumption that I had been (must have been) rejected by the male was shown in its stark nakedness and questions asked by others ('Haven't you got a father figure?') even though the school is full of men, seem to almost beg me to revert to normal. The horrible thing about exclusion is that, after several years of fighting to keep my family together, the headmaster (who feels the boys need a father) will succeed in having him catapulted into a boarding school. No one has sympathy for the oldest boy's predicament of having an inadequate father who frightened us all by his moods and tantrums and whose problems finally gave me the courage to make the break.

Can I end by saying that my bank manager has been marvellous, and that the London Borough of Sutton have shown much kindness and tolerance about my mortgage during two sticky years. In effect, I think men are basically decent and kind if we can push past their labelling instinct.

Yours,
Molly McNutty,
95 Stanley Park Road,
Carshalton.

Dear Spare Rib:

I feel like writing to you, and, hopefully, to share a particular situation with your readers. Also perhaps to hear from women who have come to terms with this experience; which is something that for me just hasn't happened yet.

Four years ago, I was divorced, awarded custody of my three children, then aged 7, 10, and 11 and was living with another man who supported all four of us. This relationship deteriorated pretty steadily for two years, until I left him; and because there was literally nowhere for me to go and no money, I returned to my ex-husband's house. He accepted the children, he has always been a good father to them. Naturally enough he did not accept me, so I moved into a room in the same neighbourhood with the man who is now my husband.

To cut a long and rambling story short, I'm now married, and have a year old son by this marriage, and am living 20 miles away from my three children, who I may say, have a very devoted stepmother, and are also well provided for materially.

All three children stay with us at intervals, and apart from the emotional damage they have suffered in the past, seem to be generally pretty contented. There are of course some

pretty bad scenes occasionally, but so far, we have all been able to help when, and as they've occurred.

As far as I'm concerned, there is only one apparently insoluble problem in all this, and that is, that I miss all three of them quite dreadfully, and the youngest boy the most of all.

My husband is aware of this, and sympathetic, my latest child is gorgeous and lovable, but just how do I stop this, at times, almost unbearable longing for the three children? Obviously, when I'm with them, I don't express this, and although at times I use my husband's sympathy, I try not to abuse it. As he says, I would probably have felt the same when they eventually left to lead their own lives, but meanwhile, has anyone any help to offer?

Name and address supplied

Dear Spare Rib:

As an American who arrived in England last December, I read Theresa D'Abreu's article 'You're not too good at baseball baby...' with quite a bit of interest.

I had no arguments with what she had to say about New York and Hollywood (though her deductions were less apt than her perceptions). What I do challenge are her comments on San Francisco.

What Ms D'Abreu took for Victorian chauvinism can reliably be said to have been courtesy and probably some diffidence. Believe me, San Franciscan men, even if they secretly yearned to be top dog, can't afford chauvinism in a city dominated by companies with politically urgent recruitment programmes for women in management. If any city in America is a mecca for independent women in industry and commerce, it has to be San Francisco. It's a city with a social schema decidedly favourable to women, it does not oppress single mothers, nor does it encourage the ghastly English phenomenon known as dolly birds.

It seems to me that Ms D'Abreu was primarily amongst people described as part of 'The New California Consciousness'. Among the hip, liberal, 'conscious minority, there is a decided parallel to the rock star cum groupie image. This is not typical of the young educated, working liberal majority. But if she thought she was regarded as property, to be respected and ignored, I am willing to bet the people involved were big on words like 'aware, conscious, dedicated, liberal, liberated,' and maybe even 'third-world, radical, revolutionary'. Further, I'll bet they worked, if at all, within the movement. Among young liberals, working productively for change within the society, there is damned little chauvinism. On 8 hours paid and probably 2 or 3 hours unpaid labour who's got time for chauvinism. America, particularly, San Francisco, moves too fast to bother any more. Any woman who's got guts, intelligence and savvy, can get a job, keep it and go to the top of her heap if she's got the motivation.

Amanda Jensen,
30 Baker Street,
London, W1

If it's that simple we wonder why you are working for change.

Dear Spare Rib,

Rosie Parker makes the following errors of fact in her otherwise very fair review of my book "Love Between Women".

1. She speaks of injury to the sex glands

during foetal life where it should be disorder. 2. In her quotation: 'these disorders lead to a male developing a feminine brain and a female a masculine one,' Mrs. Parker omits the beginning of my sentence: 'This means in simple terms that.'

Mrs. Parker ought to have included the following to give the true meaning of my text. 'According to Professor Dörner there can be no doubt that a disorder in the development of the sex glands in foetal life alters permanently an eroticising zone seated in the hypothalamus, which is a part of the mid-brain mainly responsible for man's emotional responses. This disorder produces male responses in a female and the opposite in a male individual'.

3. There is no contradiction, as Mrs. Parker assumes, between those inverted responses and the fact that concepts of mental sexual characteristics are as outworn as they are indefinable. Mrs. Parker obviously did not recognise that these characteristics refer to a person's gender-identity. (pp. 46,47).

Yours truly,

Dr. Charlotte Wolff, M.D., F.B.Ps.S.
10, Redcliffe Place,
London, SW10 9DD

Dear Spare Rib:

I've just discovered you. Where have we both been the past months.

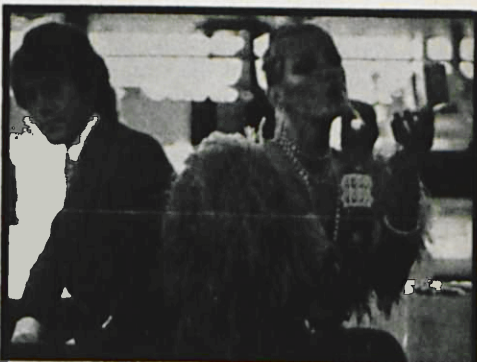
No male shall put us asunder.

Best wishes and love from
Babs James,
47 Lyndhurst Drive,
Kidderminster,
Worcestershire.

Dear Spare Rib:

As a constant weight-watcher, I was very interested in your article 'How vital are your statistics' in May Spare Rib. I enclose a recent magazine advertisement for Sweetex which seems a perfect example of how admen play on our neuroses about the way we look to others.

Yours sincerely,
Angela Summer,
107 Portland Road,
Kingston,
Surrey.



Sweetex shapes the way you look.

Millions of words are written about weight-watching, but the most important words are not written - or spoken. They are thought.

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A little loogie here, a full tale told there.

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A teaspoonful of sugar in your coffee adds up to 27 Calories, enough that against one Sweetex - or Calorex!

A 500 tube of Sweetex cuts out an intake of 13,500 Calories. Everybody has problems, who needs 13,500 extra?

Sweetex (then Calorex).

Rib

Here is the re-vamped Spare Rib - columns to let you know what you're in for every month and features as irregular as before. Anna Raeburn and Angela Briggs will answer your inquiries and any of us will be pleased to hear suggestions or argue about them if necessary.

Ellen's Diary, shows a woman's confusion when she begins to live her life through a man. It will continue as she rediscovers her own identity and changes her relationships.

The first feature this issue, 'Why Did Women Become Nazis,' uses stills from the film 'Swastika' to illustrate Hitler's (wait for it) sex appeal, German women reacted to him like a Heath in Bowie's clothing. This film is the only one to have made people who were living in Germany in the thirties exclaim 'Yes, that's just how it was'.

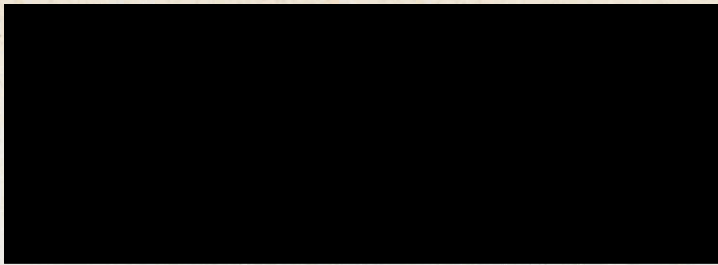
Our subscription price has gone up to £2.80. Last year we weren't charging the full price for twelve issues nor charging for postage and can't afford to keep that up. It's still the best way of making sure you receive your copy each month, unless you've already ordered it through your newsagent.

Cover photograph by Roger Morton

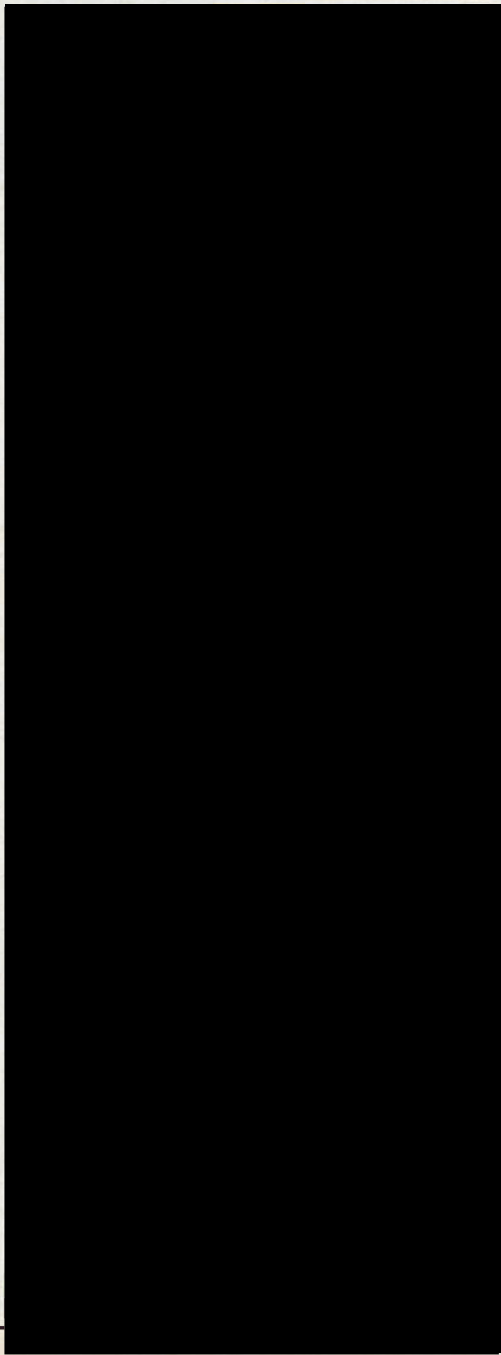
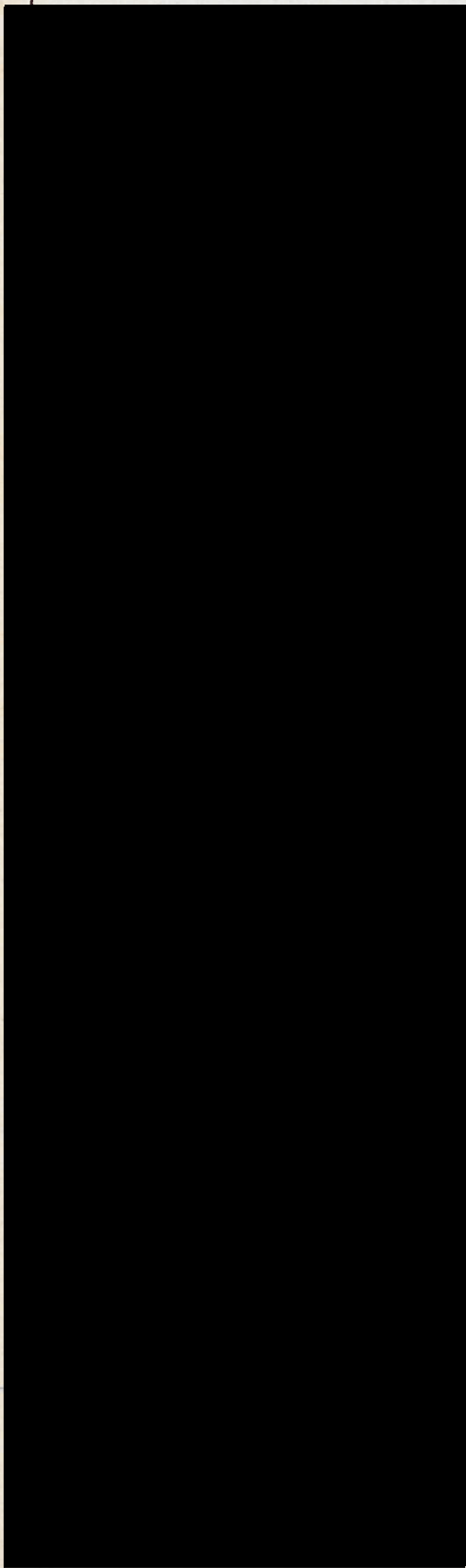
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photograph by Claire Schwob



DEFICIENT DEPRESSION

Vitamin therapy has proved successful in the treatment of a common and highly distressing side-effect of the Pill - depression. Doctors at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington have discovered that the depression associated with oestrogen administration may be the result of a deficiency in vitamin B6.

It is estimated that as many as 7 per cent of women on such brands of Pill suffer from depressive symptoms, including pessimism, general dissatisfaction, crying and tension.

In a recent trial at St Mary's half the women complaining of this sort of depression were found to be deficient in vitamin B6, also known as pyridoxine. Administration of the vitamin alleviated their symptoms but had no effect on the other half. The theory is advanced that pyridoxine may be necessary to maintain a balance in the metabolism of brain amines known to play a part in depression.

The suggestion that pyridoxine should be given to all women on the Pill meets with the qualified support of the doctors who conducted the trial.

Other facts about the Pill have emerged recently: the newly introduced mini-Pills which contain progestogen only, have been found to be safer because they do not cause the disturbances of blood coagulation and liver function sometimes associated with the traditional combined brands containing oestrogen as well as progestogen.

MATERNITY NEGLECT

A survey carried out in Scotland indicates that mothers are generally satisfied with medical standards of antenatal care, but criticise some hospitals for failures in human relations.

Health visitors distributed questionnaires to 730 mothers of new babies who had experienced childbirth either at home or in hospital. The majority of respondents preferred their chosen place of delivery, though most believed that having a baby in hospital was safer, and some criticised the policy of discouraging home confinements.

The majority of both groups believed that husbands should be allowed to remain with their wives during childbirth. Most mothers also said that they would like to see 'small family doctor units where mothers could be delivered by their own doctor or local midwife'.

The report notes that both praise and criticism of services were mainly based on success or failure in human relations. Mothers complained about long waiting times at antenatal clinics in spite of appointments systems.

The questionnaires revealed that 49 per cent of mothers were left alone during the first stage of labour, and 12 per cent during the second stage. The report is strongly critical of the latter figure, describing it as an 'inhuman practice'.

Only 60 per cent of mothers found the sanitary arrangements in hospital adequate. Just under half said that they had not had a cervical cancer smear, and 4 per cent said that

they did not know. The report recommends far more informative communication on the part of hospitals with expectant mothers in order to meet their human and personal needs. Mothers should be informed when they are given their cancer smear and told where to go for the next one, the report urges.

The survey and report were compiled by the Scottish Association for improvements in the maternity services.

WAITING FOR GONORRHEA

The main reasons for the current worldwide growth of VD are inadequate health education and a tendency among medical personnel to underestimate its importance, according to the 1972 report of the World Health Organisation.

The director-general of WHO, Dr Martelino Candau, retiring in July after 20 years in the post, writes in his report that as far as VD is concerned 'the world is in the grip of a virtual epidemic'.

This is in spite of the introduction of antibiotics and advances in diagnostic techniques which, at the time WHO was founded 25 years ago, gave hope that these diseases could be rapidly suppressed.

National health authorities are officially recording rates of 3 to 500 cases of gonorrhoea per 100,000 inhabitants, but they admit that these figures are only a fraction of the total numbers. In almost all countries the annual increase in prevalence is as high as 8 to 10 per cent, mostly among young people in the 15 to 20 age-group.

Admitting that changes in social behaviour and the highly contagious nature of sexually transmitted diseases has contributed to this rise, Dr Candau places the main blame on delays in adequate treatment for patients and their contracts. Despite the emphasis on sex in contemporary societies, sex education and health education in many countries is 'deplorably inadequate'. 'Quick action is essential before sexually transmitted diseases become completely out of control', he writes.

Dr Candau urges doctors and health workers to play an effective part in the diagnosis and treatment of VD, and to cooperate with specialised agencies in campaigns of prevention.

THERE'S SOMETHING NASTY IN THE MILK

Recently in maternity hospitals in Switzerland nursing mothers were forbidden to feed their babies. It was discovered that human milk was seriously contaminated by insecticides - chlorinated hydrocarbons. The source of the dangerous substances was not known for certain but it was assumed that vegetables or cereals had been treated with insecticides by the grower and subsequently digested by the expectant women. Several consignments of cheese from Switzerland were condemned by the USA for the same reason. An event which jolted the Swiss into making new regulations in order to control excessive use of insecticides. ■

Angela Briggs will answer queries from readers on how to go about finding help with medical problems. She is not a doctor, however, and cannot advise on specific aspects of diagnosis or treatment.



photograph by Bruce Rae

Bra Manufacturers Are Sexist
None of us took this accusation seriously, even though we'd received a letter from a reader who couldn't buy a lacy bra her size. Then Kaori O'Connor suggested there was more to it than the laws of supply and demand.

Knockers, dugs, boobs, bazooms, tits, and jugs sound like something you'd rather not have - like gonorrhea. But they're all slang words for breasts, the most striking part of a woman's body and very desirable indeed to judge by the contents of men's magazines. The Bible likens beautiful breasts to twin roebucks, and Gautier's Mademoiselle de Maupin had breasts which sprang to the kiss like roses bursting into bloom. Roses are lovely - but breasts by other names are not so sweet. And if they're really so marvellous why do we have to keep them covered up?

Breasts are glands which distinguish those living things which nurse their young from others - like chickens - which simply lay them. The Oxford English Dictionary gives as the first meaning of breast;
Each of the two soft protuberances situated on the thorax in females in which milk is secreted for the nourishment of their young.





These are the proud breasts of motherhood, marriage, and all the other social virtues. The sight of a nursing mother is touching – but so is the sight of a topless dancer in full swing. For whatever the biologists say about them, we see breasts primarily as sexual objects, not sources of nourishment. And so long as people persist in believing that sex is 'bad' and non-marital sex even worse, the breasts will occupy the anomalous position of calling forth the 'highest' feelings and 'lowest' urges simultaneously.

'Cognitive dissonance' is the term psychologists give to reconciling irreconcilables – like trying to square the organs of virtuous motherhood with the twin neon signs of overt female sexuality. If there are two kinds of women and one kind of breast there might – shocking thought – be only one kind of woman after all. And since few people seem keen to accept that possibility, quite a lot of effort has gone into spreading the belief that there are two kinds of breasts.

We need only look up in the tube to see how London Transport has solved the problem of when-is-a-breast-not-a-breast. From a baby's point of view, the nipple is the all-important oral contact point which permits the flow of nourishment. On the other hand, the erect nipple is the most visible sign of sexual arousal. By removing all nipples from tube adverts L.T. solves the angst of having to reconcile mother and lover – without a nipple it's another kind of breast. Retouching model photographs is one thing – but people are less easy to mess about with, so the easiest thing to do with breasts and the problems they bring up is to cover them. And maybe it's no accident that two L.T. symbols placed side by side look suspiciously like a brassiere.

On one level brassieres have a very simple function – they cover, and as long as the breasts are covered, one can go on ducking the question forever. Like an ostrich with its head in the sand. But on a far more subtle level brassieres also promote the idea of two kinds of breasts. Young girls with a girth of 28 inches and positively concave chests are provided with what are called 'training bras'. These contrivances – rather like surgical bandages embellished with well-spaced sponge rubber cut-outs – are tied round the chest in the fond hope that they will 'shape' subsequent growth. They are always white and as plain as possible, although an embroidered rosebud may be placed encouragingly between the cups. All very trying, but things improve in the happy fields between 32A and 38C, when one can wear the decolte bras which push the breasts together to form a cleavage. Very useful for slipping things into, and naughtily

ADJUSTABLE CLEAVAGE BRA. For that deep down cleavage. Front fastening cups can be brought together for fabulous uplift and cleavage or left apart to suit your mood. Can be worn anywhere any time. In black, white or red.



reminiscent of other parts of the body that come that way without being pushed. The breasts repose in a nest of lace and wire, available in white, black, beige, rose, and brown. But past 36D or 38C you get stuck back with the practical contraptions – if you're that big you must be a mother. Or you should be. These are the 'supportive' bras, plain and white, which shore up the sag and separate rather than compress – no secrets here. So far as the general trade goes, there are definitely two kinds of bras – and therefore breasts – and therefore women.

The plain practical ones are for the non-sexuals; pre-pubertal girls and post-partum mothers. Separated cups, no cleavages, no frills, and white like a wedding. The sexuals get the colours, the lace, and the pushup-pinchmes. Of course no one can stop the 34B mother of 5 from buying a decolte bra – but if she does, she's bound to feel a wee bit naughty at least.

There are street trades and street trades, and things take on a different shape among the clientele of mail-order houses specialising in exotic lingerie. On account and in plain wrapper the postman can drop in a rousing range of bras for 'funtime' which bear no relation to the High Street selection. Little nothings which hold the breasts and nipples out like apples on a tray. Coy numbers with 10p-sized holes which keep the breasts in filmy black gauze but let the nipples out to play. Contrivances of patent leather straps which run circles round the breasts and not much more; available in red and black only. These brassieres solve the problem by squashing the maternal image completely – not very satisfactory unless we want to be the last generation. All things considered, brassieres are insidious, and it's no wonder they get burned.

Words like knockers and tits, and the contradictory practices of admiring breasts and then covering them up, can all be seen as attempts to make nature correspond to our social values and morals. We believe that women cannot be maternal and sexual at the same time, and rather than trying to change our views of women, we dodge the issue with retouched photographs, brassieres, and dirty words. Not a very well-balanced view, and the appalling prospect of having to live with it doubtless accounts for the dreadful posture of precocious schoolgirls. Perhaps breasts are something one would rather not have, for all the trouble they cause. Certainly, until the sight of the naked breast can be taken calmly and without moral undertones, and until society as a whole is willing to develop a more natural, unitary view of women, it's worth remembering that it's what's up front that counts – against you.

SHE CAN DO IT

A non-profit making agency where women make light of heavy work, earn money and please themselves.

She Can Do It is a new kind of employment agency. Set up by four women who met through the Women's Liberation Workshop, Lilian Mohin, Zena Cook, Judy Barrington and Elyse Dodgson, it aims to ensure that women can work irregular hours - when they have the time or the inclination - rather than make lots of money. Of course the women want decent pay for the job, but they don't want the agency to charge the exorbitant rates that usually go into someone else's pocket. Judy, for instance, is giving driving lessons in her area for £1.50 an hour, quite a bit less than the going rates of £2.20 charged by Driving Schools.

They keep overheads down by using a card index system for the names of women who join, at the moment kept by Elyse who answers inquiries. Her telephone number of 01 579 1693 if you're interested, and she takes calls between 9am and 1pm when she has to be at home to mind her two young children. They plan to keep on organised in this way so that women who choose to stay home can contribute. There are no office rents to pay and the contact between client and agency is kept personal and friendly. Alan Neale, the agency's first male client for a removal job said 'I did not see any reason why women should not be equally as capable as men at moving furniture, and in fact they turned out to be more so - perhaps because intelligence is

more important than brute force'.

It's not just intelligence that matters, it's often understanding. Suzette spent weeks trying to find a woman driving instructor because she was terrified of making mistakes and felt a woman would be more sympathetic. Judy says that there are quite a few women around wanting to join the agency as instructors, who enjoy driving and the idea of passing on their skills much as she does.

Sometimes it depends on enthusiasm. The group have been asked to pull down someone's lean-to, a back room which used to be the kitchen. Any of them could find out the best way to bash down a brick wall, the point is to discover 'which of us is the most aggressive and would have the most fun doing it'.

They all stress the importance of sharing knowledge any of the group acquires by learning about so-called male jobs, and of women realising that their traditional skills can be a useful way of earning money. A friend of Judy's was excellent at redecorating but instead of doing it for love in her spare time, it took the agency to make her realise she could do it to support herself. A woman rang the agency recently wanting some embroidery done, and it can be

quite difficult to ask for money when you're used to doing it for pleasure.

They helped rewire the West London Women's Centre, a derelict house acquired by several Women's Liberation groups in the area, from Hammersmith Council. They had no experience of wiring and no knowledge of electricity, so sat down and considered their assets 'common sense, willingness, and literacy'. From reading several books on the subject 'we discovered the mystique surrounding technology had kept us from finding out how simple such work is and also how tedious'.

Their first job involved quite a few experiments. After pooling their resources to buy a 12cwt Bedford van, they moved house for Sandy Martin from East to West London. 'On that job we charged an hourly rate and were very careful to waste no time on tea breaks or chat. We thus learned quite a lot about how much furniture takes how much time to move by which combination of people. Soon we'll be able to charge a flat rate for a removals job on the basis of this experience and then, of course, we might relax and have a cup of tea between shifting the wardrobes and shifting the beds'.

In the first four weeks of She Can Do It they already have 30

women on the register, offering interior and exterior decorating, electric wiring, gardening, plastering, light carpentry, baby sitting, academic research, typing, translating, catering, photography, embroidery and removals. They haven't yet sorted out all the information sent in by the members of Women's Liberation groups, so their scope will be wider.

At present they charge a small introductory fee for anyone employing the services of the agency and hourly rates for most of the jobs. 'We hope, however, as we acquire greater experience, to be able to quote a flat rate for each individual job. We also hope to continue expanding our register for women who want to work either regularly or on an occasional basis, if they have children or other commitments. By compiling a list of female-owned or female-run enterprises we would hope to pass onto other women any requests we could not answer'.

They also hope to pass on confidence. Judy used to be marketing director of an engineering firm, Zena has worked for ILEA, Lilian has brought up two teenage children, and Elyse, after trying any number of jobs, has two babies. They have proved they can have a go at anything and want to help other women do the same. **M. R.**



photograph by Angela Phillips

"There's a kind of overkill operating about sex.."

photograph by Bob Mazzer



We place ads for underwear, deodorants and menstrual tampons beside the escalators and liberally across the pages of our publications. We sell everything from doors to diamonds via sex and it's usually feminine sex at that. Most newspapers and magazines carry articles on one aspect or another of sexual life but judging by the number of letters received by the various agony columns, the problems go on and on.

There is much more information available but the application of it is another matter. There is a great deal of anxiety about measuring up to the media image of an acceptable man or woman.

Once we didn't know we could have orgasms. Now we're frightened to death that we don't have them in the right place or that there's only one instead of twenty four at a time. We've taken sex out of the broom closet and put in on the bathroom shelf and still nobody knows very much about how to live with.

It is difficult to discuss because it is essentially individualistic. What works for one doesn't for another. What she needs, you don't mind about. The intensity of the sex drive is immeasurable, indefinable and let it be said, that while nobody would deny that Masters and Johnson's work was crucial, it was not to do with the much more complex sorting out of the emotional, psychological side of sex.

Of all the therapists available, aunts or agony columnists have the toughest assignment. They have to apply themselves to trying to be helpful in the most personal area through the most impersonal means. That means working with a sense of defeat a great deal of the time. You try to read between the lines, offer information and pray. Often the most responsible answer to a letter is to persuade the writer into a face to face situation with somebody, even if the first alternative is not ideal.

Since the confusion often arises because you might be trying to fit into a pattern rather than find out who you really are, discussing yourself with other women is easier than expecting to solve it simply by talking it over with your partner.

I don't like the terms agony columnist or aunty. They imply an authority which isn't there. You can't consult experts on sex because there aren't any sexual experts.

Let's just say that you ask and we'll do our best to reply, fully, truthfully, warmly, without mucking about. Sexually most of the things that women worry about have affected other women at one time or another. We do have a lot of common

emotional experience. Let's work out of that.

letter: *You'll probably think I'm crazy but you seem sympathetic so I thought I'd write and tell you there's just one problem in my life and that's the size of my bosom. Is there a course of tablets I can take for bigger boobs? I don't want the bother of exercises or anything, just a course of pills. Can you advise me?*

reply: We don't think you're crazy but you are a bit confused. You don't tell us the size of the much despised bosom and we've no idea of your proportions. It sounds as though you're mad about somebody who's commented that he likes a big bosom. Or that you're not a great success with men and feel that this outstanding feature would improve your chances. There is no miracle to enlarge the breasts. There's a school of thought devoted to Melbrosia tablets which are on sale in chemists and health food stores but we've never tried them. Otherwise it's the not-terribly-effective hard work of exercise or a plastic operation but in any case, a second and fuller letter would help us to be more constructive in your case.

letter: *I've tried to talk to my doctor about this and he sent me to a Harley Street doctor who didn't think I was abnormal after an internal examination. The point is that I have been married for 20 years and do not have orgasms. This has never upset me very much but my husband gets extremely bothered. The trouble is possibly that I have a very small and completely covered clitoris. Do you know of anyone to whom I could be referred who could put this right?*

reply: If we were talking, I'd ask you bluntly "Do you enjoy sex, making love with your husband"? I can't ask that directly but I can only answer your letter based on one of two premises. You do or you don't. It seems to me that either you have had twenty not too exciting but pleasant and enjoyable years of loving sex with your husband. Or that you have been enduring it, thinking of it as a duty and finally, nagged by him and exposed to "everybody should have an orgasm" syndrome, you've written to us.

If the first premise is accurate and you've enjoyed what you've had, then sit your husband down gently and tell him so. There's no point in creating an anxiety where there's no need. I'm sure that in 1973 it's heresy to admit it, but there are many women who don't need to have an orgasm to have enjoyable pleasurable sex.

If the second premise is on target, poor

Sexually most of the things that women worry about have affected other women at one time or another. We do have a lot of common emotional experience. Let's work out of that.

you. You may be right in that you have a hooded clitoris but what is much more likely is in your husband's ineptitude and your inhibition, you've never sorted out what would do most for you. You don't comment further on the nature of your relationship with your husband but if it is a close and good one, it isn't too late to start calling a spade a spade and telling him how to stimulate you. You don't mention either if you masturbate and if you can come to orgasm through masturbation and because you haven't mentioned it, I presume you don't. If you'd like to try that, you might find it even easier to help your husband to excite you. I think that all these things should be taken into consideration first but privately I am supplying you with the name of a gynaecologist who's a bit more on the ball than the one you describe. If there is anything physically amiss, which I doubt, he'll tell you so and help you sort it out.

letter: *My husband has always had sexual difficulties and on top of that was often abroad for long periods of time. We had two small children which made divorce seem out of the question. We have settled into fairly independent lives. About two years ago I met a married man with three children. We fell in love and have met as often as possible ever since. I get more and more deeply involved although I don't think that either of us is likely to leave our families. I can reach orgasm but not in intercourse. Stupidly I pretended from the first and it distresses me more and more that I cannot.*

reply: It's going to sound like a cliché but I don't find it unusual that you should be unable to come to orgasm in this situation. You say that you get more and more involved but you're clear-eyed enough to see that it is probably leading nowhere. The psychological pattern is that you must withhold something because otherwise you are laying yourself wide open to be hurt. So you commit yourself emotionally but you hold back sexually. I wonder how "real" this love is? Have you ever talked about leaving your respective partners and making a life together? If this is out of the question, then you must allow yourself to face that and if you are to continue the relationship and enjoy it as fully as you would like, then you'd better consider telling the man the truth and start again from that basis. The one point missing from your letter is that you don't say whether or not you've ever experienced orgasm through intercourse.

If you haven't that makes your immediate problems a little more difficult. If you have then it further strengthens the withholding theory. Tension is a great killer of sexual pleasure. Allowing for the stress of the

situation, try to look it in the face and then relax as much as possible.

letter: *My marriage is on the point of breaking down because I have never had intercourse with my husband. He has been very understanding so far but can't go on much longer. I can let him touch me anywhere but when it comes to him lying on top of me, I just push him off. I am terrified of having sex and of having a baby. My doctor says it will take time but it's already been three years and he still says the same.*

reply: I am terribly sorry to hear of your difficulties. Please don't feel that you are alone because your problem is a surprisingly common one in this country. Go to your doctor and put your foot down. You can be treated psychotherapeutically to help you deal with the psychology of your attitudes and physically with dilators of various sizes to get you used to the idea of intercourse at your local hospital. If your doctor refuses to take more positive action, I suggest you contact the local Family Planning Association and ask to be put in touch with their nearest Clinic for Marital Difficulties. These clinics exist in most major towns in Britain and deal with the full range of sexual disfunction. Generally speaking the staff are skilful and sympathetic and I am sure they will do their best to help you. In the meantime, you don't mention what method of birth control you use. If, as I suspect, the answer is none, then try and get that arranged because the fear of conceiving may well be adding to the difficulties you are having sexually. You do not mention whether you masturbate nor whether you have tried making love to your husband with him underneath, but this would also help to loosen you up in psychological terms. However, the main thing is not to worry and strain any more. Just get cracking and sort things out.

letter: *We've been living together for about three years and have known each other for a long time. We love each other very much but our sex life is and always was hopeless. At first we thought it was merely inexperience - neither of us had had many previous relationships nor were we particularly enlightened about it. My man is getting very frustrated and feels a failure because I am unable to achieve orgasm. There are many attractive girls where we live, a temptation he resists but this in turn creates great psychological tension and I am "uptight" even if he isn't. We have discussed our problems openly but don't know where to go from here. My doctor seemed to think the answer to it all was marriage but it goes against the grain and*

would, I'm sure, hammer the nails into the coffin.

I cannot be stimulated to frenzy. I can do it by myself but I can't let him do it. I don't feel as though I ought to be frigid. How far does orgasm depend on perfect techniques and how far on attitude of mind? Should we separate for a while and go out with other people?

Would this increase or decrease our confidence - after all, it would be quite a cynical move in order to rearrange our own lives.

reply: Let's take it all bit by bit because your letter is quite a comprehensive one. You don't want to get married. You want a facsimile of a marriage, i.e. a stable faithful relationship but you don't really trust that. You get worried about your man being attracted to others although he obviously cares about you enough to continue to live with you when things aren't going too smoothly and by your account, never have done. Anybody who can reach orgasm through masturbation can through intercourse. If you don't it's because a) you don't want to or b) he doesn't know what to do for you sexually - and you probably aren't telling him. That's not a putdown. A woman has to be incredibly self-assured to tell a man what to do for her in bed and a lot of men still freak when they hear such directions, no matter how gently phrased. How much of orgasm is technique and how much is state of mind is asking for a general answer on a subject which must vary completely from person to person. I think it's mostly state of mind that matters. Perhaps you had the kind of upbringing that forbade the state of mind, i.e. ladies don't get randy, and although you've dealt with that intellectually, you are still floundering around with it emotionally. In any case, there is nothing to be gained by continuing to go to bed and getting nowhere. I suggest that you don't make love for a month. Kiss, cuddle, stroke but don't have intercourse. If you remove the stress situation from your lives for that length of time, what may well happen, if you have the feelings for each other you describe, is that you'll suddenly get "carried away" and all the difficulties will dissolve. Failing this, then you would be best to separate, to go out with other people and for that matter go to bed with them and to re-discover each other little by little, as if you had never had an intimate relationship. The underlying theme would still be to try and stand back from what is an intolerable emotional situation and see it in a new light. My feeling, and it's only that, is that the month's abstinence will work but you've both got to apply yourselves to it and that means that he can't carp about it - just do it and see the very best of luck.

Anna Raeburn

NEWS

KIRBY RENT STRIKE: 2,000 TENANTS REFUSE TO PAY.

For the last eight months one of the longest and most underpublicised rent strikes has been going on in Kirby.

On October 16th, the day the Housing and Finance Act came into operation, 2,000 tenants on the Tower Hill council estate came out on strike as a protest against the Tory governments' new policy. Under the terms of the Act rents were put up - supposedly gradually, but the effect of the increase was immediately apparent. 'Before the strike' says Ray Long, Treasurer of the Tenants Action Committee, 'The rents at Tower Hill were on average £4.50 a week, when the act went through they were put up to about £7.00 a week, with plans to increase them to £9.00 by the end of a year'.

The Action Committee had in fact been formed in anticipation about six months before the act was passed. So they were prepared. On October 16th, 2,000 tenants stopped paying any rent. They organised themselves into committees and sub-committees - a highly organised operation which can leaflet the entire estate in under two hours, bringing all the tenants up to date news on what is happening.

'So far' continues Ray Long, 'there have been no evictions. But in November, just after the strike began, the Council served orders on seven people whose rents were in arrears. We erected barricades across the roads to stop the bailiffs getting onto the estate. All the women were out everyday keeping the Council men away. What was interesting was that six of the people were given 28 days to get out, but Tony Boyle, the secretary of the Tenant's Action Committee was

only given 24 hours. But, with everyone's effort, no one was evicted'.

The Labour controlled Kirby Council has had a divided attitude towards the strike. Some for it, some against. Mr Winstanley, the council housing officer has been particularly vindictive towards the strikers. At the beginning he sent round rent officers to try and threaten people with eviction if they didn't pay up. According to Ray Long he used very dirty methods. 'For instance, he would send the officers round to women alone, old people, abusing them and being very threatening. A lot of people started to get frightened by this and so they paid up. From there being an almost total strike, there are now only 400 people left on strike, but that is enough to really worry the council.'

By law, local council's can be declared bankrupt if they run into debt over £100,000. If this happens the matter is taken out of their hands and comes under the jurisdiction of the central government. Tower Hill hasn't quite made a debt of that amount yet, but it can't be too long before it does. Whatever

else happens, the situation is certainly going to prove an embarrassment to Kirby's MP, the Hon. Harold Wilson. At a meeting recently in Kirby several women from Tower Hill asked him to come and talk to them about the rent situations. Wilson refused.

Prior to the act, Tower Hill was totally lacking in amenities for children. Twenty-five per cent of the estate are unemployed and a large percentage are under 15. There were no playgrounds or facilities of any kind. Amazingly enough, when the tenants went on strike, the Council provided swings, playgrounds and entertainments for the kids. But 'that was not enough,' say the committee.

In April the Council issued court orders to the tenants. All the orders were collected at the weekly meeting (usually attended by about 50-60 people) and promptly sent back to the Council with the words 'Rent Strike' written on each one. They were due to appear in court on the 24th of May; in their absence, court decided that the tenants should pay off their debts at a rate of £30 per month - they decided to ignore this as

well.

Most of the active campaigners have been women. At the beginning when the rent officers were being rough with the tenants the women on the estate organised vigilante groups to go round the estate with the rent collectors to make sure they didn't try to bully the more vulnerable strikers. They also organised fund raising; so far the committee has raised about £400 from the tenants, most of which has been used up in administrative costs, to date there is about £30 in the kitty.

The current fear at the moment is that Earning's Attachment Orders will be served on the tenants. When this happens the rent (or whatever debt it happens to be) is automatically deducted from the tenants' pay packet or social security. But for the time being the strike goes on - and if they can hold out for long enough, perhaps more people will follow their example and so coerce the government into subsidising rents in the public sector as against pouring tax payers money into the pockets of the private householder.

Rosie Boycott



*Towerhill tenants, Kirkby, Lancs.
Photograph by Mike Cohen, Socialist Worker.*

PARA-PROFESSIONALS' BAD DEAL.

It is well known that nurses and hospital auxiliary workers are very badly paid. Less publicity has been given to the shockingly low salaries paid in the predominantly female professions of physiotherapy and occupational therapy. A recent letter to the Guardian from Ms R. Golightly pointed out that physiotherapists have little choice of work outside the National Health Service and they are compelled to accept a basic take-home pay of £16 a week, rising to a maximum of approximately £20 after seven years. Training takes three years and four months, is unpaid and of a high standard, including a knowledge of anatomy equivalent to the medical students' second MB exam. 84% of physiotherapists are women. Likewise, occupational therapists, of whom a very small proportion are men, get a starting salary of £1,110 in National Health hospitals, after three years' training, rising to a basic maximum of £1,434. The top salary an occupational therapist can earn is £2,661.

Women's Report

PUNISHING BABY SNATCHERS

Judges continue to deal viciously with women who take other women's babies, even though many of these offenders have recently lost their own child. Yet since 1938 (Infanticide Act) even the law has recognised that childbearing can have disturbing effects, so that the woman who causes the death of her child under the age of 12 months does

not commit murder 'if at the time of the act or omission the balance of her mind was disturbed by reason of her not having fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to the child or lactation consequent upon the birth'. Yet Pauline Jones got two years. Recently a 35-year-old woman got two years for abduction by force of an eleven month old baby, plus six months for shoplifting; and a nineteen-year-old got 21 months for stealing a friend's baby, after Justice Melford Stephenson rejected an offer by nuns to provide a home and help for her.

Women's Report

SNEAKY!



Eccentric Evening Standard writer Lee Langley, who exits each morning from her suburban house as though she were leaving for work. 'Then, instead of heading for the gate, she nips across the shrubbery border, and clambers over the window sill into her front room. Three hours later, out she climbs, strides to the front door and lets herself in.' The reason? Let Ms Langley explain: 'school holidays, and a small son who feels my time is his time. Curiously enough, he never bothers his father, who is left to bash his typewriter.' Not a word about the co-operative chauvinism of husband and son which necessitated this bizarre scene.

IF COUNCILS REDEVELOP THEY MUST RE-HOUSE.

Shelter has called on local authorities today to inform residents about the new Home Loss Payment and their right to rehousing after displacement for redevelopment under the Land Compensation Act.

For the first time local authorities now have a statutory duty to rehouse all residents displaced by redevelopment, where suitable alternative accommodation at reasonable cost is not available. Previously there was only moral obligation, and authorities only considered people who had been resident in an area two years before a local authority declared it would be redeveloped.

House occupiers with five years residence are now entitled to a Home Loss Payment of three times the rateable value of their part of the house, if they are displaced by Compulsory Purchase, Clearance, or Closing and Demolition Orders. The payment must be claimed from the local authority within six months of the removal, or for those removed since October 1972 within six months of 23 May 1973. The local authority must pay within three months of the claim.

Geoffrey Martin, Shelter's Director, said today: "We are calling on local authorities to make these new benefits known to residents. So often those made homeless do not know their rights and cannot get them because the government and local authorities keep quiet about them."

BA-BA-BARBARA



Remember Barbara Cartland? In the May 6 *Sunday Times* that magnificently well-preserved doyenne of sexist literature gave us a few sisterly words on sport. Ready? 'If you've got a husband who's a terrific football fan, the sooner you learn about football the better. A woman's job in life

is to inspire the men. It's like the theatre, you don't have to act to enjoy what's going on. If you live with men... you soon find that nobody actually wants a woman to show off. They want to show off to you. I've watched, and said 'wonderful, wonderful.' Women's real sport is chasing men.'

Women's Report

FREE VASECTOMY

The first free vasectomy service in the country started on Teesside in June. The North Tees Hospital Management Committee gave the go-ahead for Teesside Council Health department to use operating rooms and equipment at the Childrens Hospital in Durham Road.

By the beginning of June there was already a waiting list and five men can be dealt with during each once-a-week session.

Jean O'Keeffe:

SIXTY SPIES

Sixty New Spies have been appointed by Sir Keith Joseph to investigate the private lives of women claiming supplementary benefit. They will join the 329 already at work. Sir Keith has ignored some of the main recommendations of the Fisher Committee (set up to look into social security abuse): to curb spying on unsupported women suspected of cohabiting, and to make the complicated claim forms more intelligible to ordinary people.

Sir Keith's decision has been widely criticised, particularly by the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her child, the National Council of Social Service, the Child Poverty Action Group and Claimants' Unions. The East London Claimants' Union organised a full-scale 'snoop' on Sir Keith's own home: Julia Mainwaring, one of the claimants, said: 'We are only going to get the sort of information the average claimant has to give. We will be getting hold of photographs of him and his wife. Perhaps then he will realise the sort of humiliation and degradation that claimants have to go through.'

The Child Poverty Action Group made the following criticisms of the 'sex spy' system:

1. That the absence of a clear-cut definition of 'cohabitation' leads to injustice.
2. That the confidential instructions given to investigators clash with published policy.
3. That investigators are too

Special Offer!

From now until the 30th of July Sheila Rowbotham's new book 'Hidden from History' will be available to Spare Rib readers for a cost of only £1.00 plus 15p post and packing (cost in the shops will be £1.50). 'Hidden from History' is in five parts: work and the family; new forms of resistance to changes in oppression and exploitation; the rise of the feminist movement and the response of the trade unions to it; the suffragettes and the socialists; and the decline of the women's movement in the 1920's and 30's. The book concludes that feminist socialism is both urgent and possible but it depends on our 'capacity to relate to the working class and the action of the working class women in transforming women's liberation according to their needs'.

Please send me a copy of 'Hidden from History'.

I enclose a cheque/PO for £1.15 to cover postage and packing.

Name:

Address:

Please make all cheques payable to Pluto Press Ltd, and return with this form to 'Pluto Press Ltd, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH, by the 30th of July.

often concerned with proving a sexual rather than a financial relationship.

4. That the investigators' activities can give women a 'bad' reputation.

5. That the appeals system is inconsistent and depends largely on how the woman's case is presented.

Women's Report



WOMENS CENTRE LIVES ON.

Contrary to rumours that the South London Women's Centre (reported in last month's issue of Spare Rib) was being forced to close because of pressure from the Hounslow Council, relationships between the council and the women's centre have in fact never been better. At a meeting held in the middle of May, Michael Norton from Interaction presented the council with information about the centre and gave them very convincing reasons why it should be kept going. So although they will be moving from their current house, which is due to be demolished in a few months, the council have agreed to try and find alternative accommodation and to support the work of the centre. Hopefully, they will make other councils see the need for women's centres which provide shelter to women and children when their husbands turn violent.

Rosie Boycott

A MISERABLE STORY

A seventeen-year-old girl hid her dead baby in a cupboard after she had given birth to it alone while her mother was out shopping. Her mother was reported as saying 'I had the impression my daughter was pregnant. She just kept saying no.' Evidently the daughter, Jill Hall from St. Paul's Cray, Kent, was too ignorant or too frightened to seek the ante-natal care that she needed.

Women's Report

PENTHOUSE PETS & MEDIA WOMEN.

Women in Advertising was the title of an evening arranged by the Creative Circle, a group of creative women in advertising. The venue was the 1950's New York kitsch of the Penthouse Club and the room was crowded with suave and defensive people gathered to listen to and debate with a panel of five speakers chaired by Pamela Horner of the British Bureau of Television Advertising. The speakers included an American, Bonnie McCone, who runs The Talent Store, an outfit which places women in the advertising profession; Patricia Mann, a creative planner at J. Walter Thompson; Midge McKenzie, active feminist and director of various television commercials; Sue Puddefoot, active in Women in Media and writer, formerly of Young and Rubicam; and May Hobbs of the Nightcleaners Union. The proceedings were a self-conscious attempt to demonstrate that the role of women in advertising, whether as the objects of the TV commercial or as decision makers in an agency, was "changing". Since the number of women in advertising is very small and is held steady if not decreasing, it was hard to discuss convincingly why women should go into the profession. And since the profession itself is one of the most manipulative and gratuitous excrescences of the consumer society, perhaps it is an advance that there is no leading agency headed up by a woman in this country, as there is in the States - the formidable Mary Wells, whose main claim to fame in the mind of the layman is that she made the momentous decision to cause Braniff Airlines' jets to be painted pink. We were shown clips from commercials and we heard out the first speakers in silence. Midge McKenzie and May Hobbs took over in a prepared sketch as respectively Mrs. Superwife and Mrs. Everywife. It was wildly funny and savagely exact, down to the vocabulary used but it was almost too gentle for the listening ears. Questions were invited from the floor and one woman tried to frame the very real dichotomy between what she was doing for a living and what she felt about it. For a moment we almost thought they might be human beings but then the rationalisations started and boy oh boy, they flew thick and fast and effortlessly. The language of the advertising world

like that of the media has become familiar to the point of cliché but the most frightening aspect which was endlessly revealed was that one was sharing the room with a lot of bright people who had never dared to stop and think about the utterly perverse channelling of their "creativity". The last person to take the microphone from the floor was a complete outsider who said that she had listened patiently but felt that the majority of the people in the room had no intention of changing anything in the profession they had chosen, because if women collectively gained the insight and the self-determination to which lip service had been paid during the evening, the first thing they would reject would be the psychological assault of the advertising world, which would render the listeners redundant. How did they feel about that? Silence.

Anna Raeburn

GUINNESS IS VERY GOOD FOR YOU



Former advertising director in West Africa Donald Lehmkuhl, says that the message Guinness tried to put over was: 'Guinness gives men an erection and replaces menstrual fluid in women'. The ads always had a sexual significance; 'The brown bottles suggest an erection'.

VIOLENCE IN THE WOMB

The long-awaited appeal to the Privy Council from Australia on whether a child can sue in respect of injuries received while in the womb will not now take place. It has been abandoned by the appellant, so the ruling given in a case where a five year old child, whose brain was damaged in a motor accident when her mother was pregnant, successfully sued for damages for pre-birth injuries, still stands.

THAT THING BETWEEN A MANS LEGS



That unknown Italian priest exposed by the tape recorder and Norberto Valentini and Clara De Meglio in their book *Sex in the Confessional*. When confronted with a woman who, after four years of separation from her husband, sought guidance about an extra-marital affair, the priest urged her to 'forget about that thing between a man's legs.' He also urged her to forget about divorce, assuring the woman that such a step would turn her into 'the devil's daughter.' The book has been threatened with suppression in Italy.

Women's Report

CHEAP PROTECTION

You can find some odd things in the advert columns these days, especially for Under a Fiver. A contraceptive vending machine for £5, knocked down from £45, was snapped up the same day by a publican. He also took three other similar machines at the bargain price which is a job lot in any language. It's surely an indication of something in famous northern pub life - I can't imagine what.

Jean O'Keeffe

BAGS ITS HERS

In the House of Lords Lady Wootton asked why women's handbags were searched in Parliament, but not men's pockets, and pointed out that it was as easy to carry a grenade in a man's jacket or overcoat as in a handbag. The Lord Privy Seal replied that he would be glad to go experimenting with Lady Wootton, but felt that the unattended package presented the greatest danger, and handbags were more likely to be left unattended than trousers. Lady Llewelyn-Davies suspected that 'there is a whiff of the male chauvinist animal about his reply.'

BOOKS, MAGS & PAMPHLETS

ISLINGTON GUTTER PRESS

A group of women have produced the latest issue of the Islington Gutter Press. It's packed with information, mainly applicable to women living in Islington, but also useful to other women... Features are on such subjects as The People's Garage, self examination health groups, housing and hospitals. There's also an article entitled 'Men's Talk'. The Gutter Press asked some men what they thought about women, their families, and home life. The Gutter Press: *Do you feel that housework makes you less of a man?*

Mr. J: *I think it's a little bit degrading, you know.*

The GP: *What do you think it feels like for a woman, if it's degrading for a man?*

Mr F: *It's not degrading really... if you wash your own jeans, or help her sweep up, if you haven't got anything else to do.*

The Islington Gutter Press is available from 11, Hemmingford Road, London N1. Price 3p.

COUNTER PSYCHIATRY

A collective from within the Counter-Psychiatry group of Gay Liberation have written a brief analysis of oppression of homosexual men and women. 'It is hardly surprising that some gay people develop neurotic traits which they attribute to their sexuality instead of to their oppression, and therefore wish to be "cured" of their homosexuality within a just society.' Clearly written, the pamphlet costs 15p plus 5p postage from Gay Information, c/o 2 Thane Mansions, Thane Villas, London N7.

SURVIVAL KIT

Mothers in Action have produced a Survival Kit for Single Mothers, at a price of 50p and intended to cover some of the immediate problems which arise from an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Pressures come from well-meaning friends, relatives and professional advisers as well as those who express hostility.'

The Kit is made up of a pamphlet Survival Notes and leaflets which can be purchased separately at 15p. From Mothers in Action, Munros House, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

RAPED BY AN ANGEL.

The Hell's Angels' Case, in which 7 men were charged with raping or abetting the rape of a 17 year old girl - and were all acquitted - shows yet again how difficult it is in this country to bring to justice men who exploit their physical domination of women. The men all claimed that the girl willingly agreed to let a group of them have intercourse with her in a garage, and another 16 year old girl said in their favour that she did not think the girl was being raped. Yet the girl was 'actively engaged in sexual intercourse' for over an hour and afterwards was found rambling and sobbing and had to be half carried to a couch in the medical examination room in the police station. The press throughout the reporting of this case has managed to highlight and glorify the salacious details and defiance of the Angels, while righteously tut-tutting and pretending to deplore. Yet it is the idea that it was all the girl's fault which comes across strongest, such as the Guardian's headline "Was girl 'hungry for sex'? - Judge" (22.3.73) and its prominent write-up with photo of the Angels' plans for a celebration gang bang the next day, when they had been acquitted.

However, as a result of this case it seems that some people are beginning to guess that men get off sex charges because they are tried by all-male juries. John Stonehouse, Labour Co-op M.P. for Wednesbury put down a question in the Commons urging that in sex cases tried by jury at least one-third of the members of the jury should be women. (Why is it that men putting the case for 'fair shares' so often think in terms of the one-third?) Mr. Stonehouse is quoted by the Evening Standard of 30.3.73 as saying: "It is possible that if women are on a jury the outcome of a case might be different" and "We do not always appreciate the danger to which young women are sometimes exposed."

And in the States rape is one of the most frequent crimes, and certainly the least reported, according to an article in the Sunday Times (18.3.73) on the 'rape squad' girls of the New York City Police. In that city the figures for rape were up 38 per cent last year, which it is suggested, may be partly due to 'the renewed sex drive of heroin addicts treated with methadone'.

However, the author does admit that 'perhaps Women's Lib, and the subsequent raising of women's consciousness has made them more prepared to undergo the humiliations and various psychological shocks involved in reporting a rape.'

The Rape Squad consists of six women detectives who carry guns, on and off duty. Women victims who cannot bring themselves to report the attack direct to a precinct cop, who is anyway unlikely to be sympathetic, can call the Rape Squad direct. Its members say: "It's clear that previously we weren't getting a clear picture of the details of the crime; women will give us details, perhaps about a fetish of the rapist, that they didn't give the man who interviewed them initially." They also go on to explain that when a woman reports a rape her troubles are only just beginning, because of the law (recently changed) requiring that a victim provide corroboration of every material element of the rape - in other words, a witness.

Protagonists of civil liberties say that the corroboration is necessary because the penalty is so severe (up to 25 years in prison), but others see it as the discrimination of a male dominated legislature.

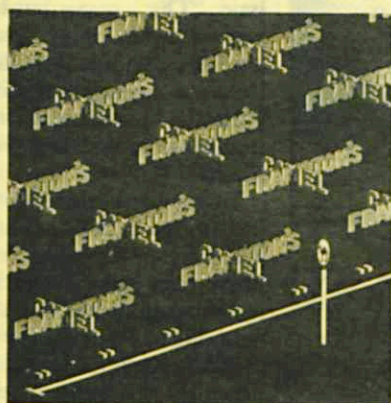
But the notion of protecting men against possible verbal complaints by women, rather than protecting women from actual physical attacks by men, dies hard. In this country again, the editors of a law journal (Law Notes, April 1973) made it plain that they believe that now, as ever, the majority of charges brought by women against men are unfounded.





Mrs. Motherwell says:

"After I've finished all my chores, I like to listen to some good music!"



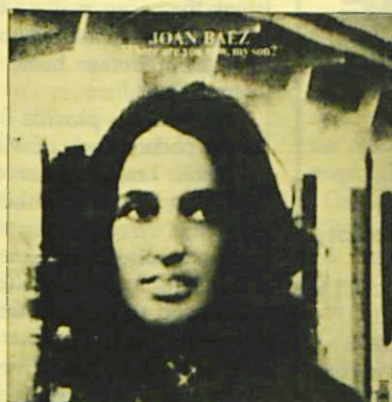
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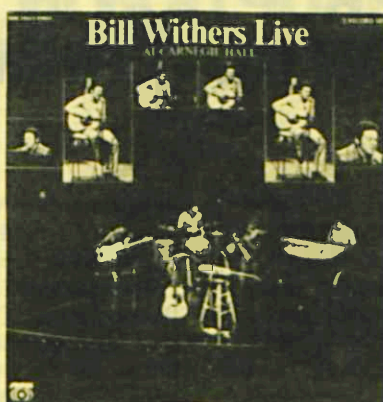
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It's time, as the Watergate Affair daily threatens to explode under President

Nixon himself, to take a look at the woman who helped to bring it to the attention of the press. I mean Martha Mitchell, whom we'd probably never even have heard of if she hadn't happened to be the wife of John Mitchell, President Nixon's former Attorney-General and the director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President; and one of those who has come under fire for his part in the Watergate Affair.

Born in 1918, Martha Mitchell grew up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where her father was a cotton broker and her mother a speech teacher. When she graduated from high school in 1937, she wrote: "I love its gentle warble, I love its gentle flow, I love to wind my tongue up, And I love to let it go." After Miami University, she taught for a spell in Mobile, Alabama, before permissiveness, she once said in an interview, drove her to Washington as a general's secretary in 1945. There she met her first husband, a salesman, and moved with him to New York. Later, they separated.

Then Martha met John Mitchell, and married him in 1957. A few years later, John Mitchell had become Richard Nixon's rather dour fellow senior partner in the Wall Street law firm of "Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander and Mitchell." And by 1969 as President Nixon's Attorney-General he had moved into the mainstream of American politics. Accordingly, the Mitchells went to Washington, where Martha discovered that "they sit back and weigh every word." "They" was the press, through which Martha Mitchell became known as a kind of popular spokeswoman. In April 1970, she called the editor of the Arkansas Gazette and instructed him "to crucify Fulbright." Fulbright because he was behind the senatorial rejection of the two Southern judges put up by President Nixon and suggested and interviewed in the first place by John Mitchell. There were other outspoken pronouncements. On the Vietnam War, in September 1970, Martha had this to say: "If this country would stick together . . . if everyone felt a common cause in Vietnam, we would have been out 16 months ago and it makes me so mad I can't see straight." Again: "As my husband has said many times, some of the Liberals in this country, he'd like to take them and change them for the Russian Communists." Martha revelled in such statements,



MARTHA MITCHELL: THEY TRIED TO PUT HER AWAY WHEN SHE EXPOSED THE CORRUPTION IN THE NIXON GOVERNMENT.

which turned her into a national institution. She was entertained as "the loquacious Mrs. Mitchell", who made "lively" telephone calls to the press. That is, until the fuse of Watergate was lit on June 17, 1972, when the five clumsy raiders of the Republicans were arrested inside the Democratic Party's headquarters in the Watergate office building. Shortly afterwards, John Mitchell resigned as the director of Nixon's re-election campaign, ostensibly because Martha had threatened to leave him if he didn't. But there was more to Martha's "ultimatum" than wifely possessiveness. What she told Helen Thomas, a United Press International reporter, was: "I love my husband very much, but I'm not going to stand for all those dirty things that go on." Martha further claimed that during an earlier call to the same

reporter, a man who had identified himself as a security agent had entered her Californian villa and "pulled the telephone out of the wall." If you think she was letting her imagination run away with her, Helen Thomas heard her say, "You just get away," before the line went dead. Then, Martha stated, five of the re-election committee's security guards had flung her on her bed and "stuck a needle in her behind." To Helen Thomas she declared: "I am black and blue. I am a political prisoner." Martha was no longer seen as the amusing, if eccentric, wife of John Mitchell, but as a potential threat to President Nixon's prospects of re-election. Reports were put out about Martha's mental instability, and some of them went so far as to say, following her latest outburst, that she had been put in psychiatric care.

More recently, when the Watergate Affair began to blow up to its present proportions, Martha Mitchell called for President Nixon to resign. She was only saying publicly what others were saying privately. But again she was seen as a threat, this time to the Nixon Administration's already badly damaged credibility, and her husband, himself now thoroughly enmeshed in the web of conspiracy surrounding Watergate, issued a public statement saying: "Martha's late night telephone calls have been good fun and games in the past. However, this is a serious issue." Shortly afterwards, Time magazine reported that Martha Mitchell had entered a hospital after suffering a nervous breakdown. Martha immediately called the New York Times and said: "That's crazy, but let them say what they want. That's not so." She also said that she was trying to live a private life now. "Martha Mitchell has a right to privacy now, and I'm going to demand it."

To put her in perspective, we have to go back to an interview she gave an American newspaper three years ago. "When I was growing up down South," she said, "the only thing for a Southern lady to do was to teach. That's about the size of it. When I was growing up all the girls got married." She also admitted that Southern women weren't active in politics. "They hardly voted, did they? I don't think they even went to the polls. I don't think anyone thought of women being controversial."

These words provide the key to the phenomenon of Martha Mitchell. Trained for teaching and marriage because these were the only "careers" open to a southern belle at the time, she didn't find her element until she discovered that as the wife of an important man, whatever she said was taken down. What Watergate has shown is not only that Martha Mitchell delighted in being controversial, but also that she was to be taken seriously. She has now given a deposition on what she knew of Watergate. She has at last been vindicated.

Stephanie Norris

FINED FOR FLYPOSTING

While women were marching in London on International Women's Day at the end of March, eight people were arrested in Lancaster for protesting against the tax-credit system.

On the night before the march Polly McDonnell, Alistair McKie and Kingsley Dawson were picked up by the police for flyposting six leaflets about the family allowance campaign on the windows of the shopping precinct in the town. All three were charged with five offences - but in the end only the 'defamation of public property' charge stuck. The arresting officer, P.C. Hogg perjured himself in court by saying that when he picked up Polly, Alistair and Kingsley they were standing by a wet poster and covered with paste. In fact when he made the arrest all three of them were running out of the precinct, nowhere near a poster. And other policemen testified that they were not covered with paste on arrival at the station.

Despite that, they were each fined £60, ordered to pay £20 for each poster, and £7 for actual damage to public property. A total of £307. The Women's Centre in Lancaster pointed out that last year the Labour Party were charged with a similar offence when they flyposted the shop windows with Labour Party Propaganda leaflets - in the same court they were fined 50p!

However, the story of harassment in Lancaster doesn't end there. On the actual day of the march about 40 people went into Mothercare and began distributing leaflets about family allowances to the shoppers. They had been there about a quarter of an hour when the place was invaded by twenty policeman and five police women. Terrific scuffles ensued - several people were injured, including one of the town's probation officers, Nigel Todd, who was kicked several times by a policeman. One woman who was there with her baby was forcibly restrained while another officer threw her pram plus baby out of the shop. Luckily the child suffered no injuries, but it was a potentially dangerous situation.

Five people were arrested as a result of the campaign in Mothercare, and charged with assault and riotous assembly. They were each fined £30 plus £10 costs and damages. A total of more than £200.

None of the men and women involved in the arrests have the money to pay the exorbitant fines. So the Lancaster Women's Centre are launching an appeal for contributions. So far they have raised £60 from discos, and other people's contributions. If you feel you can help in any way, please contact the 'Women's Centre, 59, Grasmere Road, Lancaster. (Tel: Lancaster 67648).

Rosie Boycott

FOREIGN NEWS

50,000 hours at the stove

The best years of our lives? or seven of them anyway, are spent in shopping and cooking. Or at least those are the figures according to the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, which figured that a man who lives to be 70 spends about 30,000 hours at table and eats about 50 tons of food, which will have taken his macho-dominated wife 50,000 hours to prepare. Now, these figures may be geared to the shopping and cooking habits of the Italian mama, but even so, her British counterpart must spend quite a lot of time over the proverbial hot stove. The answer may be to stick to his kisses sweeter than wine, and let him dish up his own pasta.

Blossoming on the bishops

Latest development in the Belgian fight to legalise abortion, born (if one may coin a phrase) after the imprisonment throughout January and February of a gynaecologist Willy Peers, has been a recent statement by the Belgian Council of Bishops, which claims that from the moment two sex cells meet, a human being has been formed and cannot be destroyed. Abortion, claim the bishops, is deeply harmful; for a woman to suppress part of herself is a backward step in her progress toward independence and development.' (Actually, the French word used by the bishops is 'blossoming'. Evidently, there are few unwed nappy-washing women blossoming forth on the Belgian Council of Bishops!)

VD rises

Things they tell us are up in the United States . . . prices, wages, and certainly the wind over the Watergate affairs. Also up is VD, some 15 per cent over last year's figures, according to the Department of Health. In fact, venereal disease cases reported last year were the highest recorded since the health service was established in 1919. Treatment has still not been perfected, and attempts to inoculate or treat through antibiotics have resulted in an alarmingly rapid build up of resistance. Well, bigger and better they say. . . or perhaps simply more.

Pregnant balance

El Al stewardesses are currently mounting a campaign to gain equality with male stewards on the Israeli airlines. The issue led to an amusing debate in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament concerning the claim by the stewardesses that air hostesses should have the right to be old, pregnant or married.

One deputy pointed out to the El Al director that he thought it would be extremely unlikely that all of the air hostessing staff on any one plane would be pregnant at the same time, and in any case, the deputy said he felt women were never prettier or more feminine than when they were pregnant.

The El Al director pointed out timidly that he thought it would be difficult to serve meals in a crowded airplane if an air hostess was heavily pregnant. 'Nonsense' replied the women's lib advocate, 'A pregnant woman has a wonderful sense of balance!'

As Le Monde pointed out in reporting this up-lifting discussion, it's election year in Israel and anything can happen.

Love temples & nurseries

'Est-politique' is taking a strange turn in Eastern Germany and Budapest; if Kurt Kohl has his way. 'love temples' financed by West German marks will finance construction of the hotel chain to serve the special needs of socialist brethren in those two capitals. Kohl, who sees his role as adapting the oldest profession in the world to the industrial era has already set up a number of temples in Western Germany and Austria under the name of 'Annabella'. The establishments are comfortable, charge a nominal rent, and provide diversions such as tennis for the girls to enjoy during off hours. Kohl definitely seems to be the type who plans ahead; he's now intending to construct nurseries near his hotels, with nurses provided to care for the 'appreciations' produced by his investment.

Continued ▶

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JOBS FOR THE GIRLS.

'Jobs for the girls' said ACTT Journal May 73.

The film and television industry in this country is predominantly male, women have exclusively female jobs (production secretary, continuity girl) which are highly responsible and skilled but low paid, or they have to be better than the men when they compete in the rat race for the highly paid jobs (director, producer). The technical grades (camera operator, sound recordist) are virtually closed to women for a series of traditional and irrational reasons. Equal Pay, as elsewhere, is a farce, possibilities of promotion for women are minimal. The BBC has recently ▶

lifted some of its restrictions for employing women in technical grades, at least on paper. We shall see.

On April 14 and 15 at this year's Annual General Meeting of the ACTT, the film and television workers union, the question of discrimination against women in the industry was raised for the first time in front of the whole membership represented at the meeting by roughly 500 men and 20 women. In recent months a union sub-committee on discrimination has been set up to gather statistics and start investigating this problem, but many of us felt that this was not enough and that, apart from pledging to combat discrimination (in any case, TUC policy), the union should do something more concrete. Three motions from three different shops were moved and seconded despite pressure to roll them all into one, so that six women had a chance to set out in detail what they were

complaining about and what they wanted. All three motions were for actively fighting discrimination; one asked for a quota system to be considered, and one that a full time paid officer be appointed and paid for by ACTT to do some serious and detailed work on wage structure, promotion, training opportunities, maternity leave, creche facilities, pensions, etc in addition to the work already being done by the committee. At the end of six speeches it was time for tea and it was decided that there would be no debate and that the three motions would be voted on immediately. They were all carried overwhelmingly. A debate would have introduced some opposing elements which it would have been interesting for the membership to hear but, all in all, we were well pleased with the result and felt that a long overdue first step had been taken to raise the consciousness of the film industry on this question.

Esther Ronay

ALCOHOLIC WOMEN: THE NUMBERS ARE INCREASING

In a new report published by the Helping Hand it is stated that there are at least 80,000 women alcoholics in Britain today. But, this could be just the tip of an iceberg, since it is only in recent years that women drinkers have started coming forward for treatment. The Merseyside Council on Alcoholism has reported the trend of an increasing number of women asking for help. 'Ten years ago the incidence of males to females was between 7 and 8 to 1. Today, from our experience the figures are between 4 and 5 to 1, with an indication that the incidence is increasing'.

On the whole men drink in a pub or with friends and women drink alone or at home. It's still considered distasteful for a woman to be seen drunk in public. Whereas a man is likely to be called 'one of the chaps' and vaguely respected for his ability to get drunk and aggressive, a drunk woman is likely to meet with abuse and dislike. So it all goes on indoors and out of sight. And for those women whose home lives are wrecked by drink there are pitifully few alternatives. At worst it could be Holloway or a mental institution, at best it could be one of the hostels run by the Helping Hand, such as St Mary's in Lambeth.

At the moment St Mary's houses about a dozen women. By the time they are there many of them have already been in hospitals or mental institutions to be dried out and they have recognized (in themselves) the problem. To be admitted to St Mary's a woman must have been off the booze for a minimum of three weeks, and a strict policy of no drink in the house is maintained. But obviously, the residents go out for the evening and sometimes return drunk, in which case they are not allowed in until they are sober. People are encouraged to go out to work - if they have no job then they are given full board and lodging and £3.25 a week.

'Far more women alcoholics than men are deeply disturbed. Invariably the women who come to us are victims of disastrous home lives', says Jean Hill, a social worker at St Mary's, 'usually they have been very

isolated at home, perhaps with the kids or just completely alone. They begin to take out this tension on their husbands and in a lot of cases it's the husbands who begin bringing home a bottle, largely to try and keep their wives quiet'. There has never been a woman at St Mary's who has been both married and working. And as a great number of married women derive their entire reason for living from their kids and their home lives, when they start to

FOREIGN NEWS CONT.:

Parliament prejudice

52 per cent of the electorate in France will be represented in 1973 by eight deputies. Doesn't sound like much of a democracy, but in France, where the Mouvement de la liberation de la Femme is only just getting underway, that's all the women they could get into Parliament at the recent elections. To put it another way, the majority of the electorate will make up only 1 per cent of the National Assembly. All of those elected have built up long-term reputations in their local constituencies, usually through service as mayor or councillor. Only in this way do women get the nod from their parties to stand for election to Parliament; but they are rarely allowed to stand for 'good seats' where the party has a chance of election. Only one of the eight, 31 year old Ms Moreau, elected on the Communist Party ticket in Paris can be considered a militant; but whether her militancy will be of the MLF variety remains to be seen. All in all it seems that the cry to arms of the Marseillaise should be revised to Marchons, Francaises!

Tracey Ulltveit-Moe

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photograph by David Levin

drink so they begin to feel incredibly guilty, which generally exacerbates the problem instead of stopping it. One woman, Jane, who came to St Mary's about a year ago had not seen her husband for 18 years. He'd also been a drinker and had walked out on her when she became an alcoholic. Her life up until the time she came to the hostel had been a continuing saga of hospitals, one night hostels, and institutions. But, her husband gets into debt and is in trouble

with the police and even after 18 years he gives her name as someone who could help to pay the debts off. Jane up's and off's to help him, totally immersed in guilt about him, and convinced that her alcoholism has been the cause of all his problems.

Suicide attempts are high among alcoholics. And so is self inflicted violence as a way of seeking attention. Another woman who came to St Mary's had been born with obvious birthmarks. She was convinced

that no man would ever want to marry her and started to drink. She ended up in a mental home where she had an affair with a man suffering from a nervous breakdown. They planned to get married when he came out, in the meantime she went to St Mary's to continue the rehabilitation programme. But, the husband-to-be turned up one night to announce he was leaving: she was found later in the bathroom after having slashed her body to pieces with a razor blade. So, she went back to hospital for three months and never returned to St Mary's. The next Jean Hill heard about her she had been picked up by a policeman for drunken behaviour one night and had cut his hand with her hand mirror which broke in the course of the arrest. She ended up in Holloway - aged 28.

Rehabilitation programmes at St Mary's take the form of group therapy sessions. All the residents meet every night for an hour, either just to talk in a group, or for lectures on the problems of alcoholism and how to cure it. Although a success rate is nearly impossible to measure, more women end up coming back to the hostel than men. For when someone leaves, unless they have a home to return to and a very sympathetic husband, chances are they end up living on their own, which especially after maybe a year in a community, starts up all the old feelings of loneliness and isolation again.

Although organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous deny that there is any difference between the male and female alcoholic, a comparison between 50 male and 50 female patients at the Glasgow Hospital showed that there were significant differences. Women, it was found, drank as a result of domestic stress, whereas men usually drank due to employment difficulties. Also, females tended to become alcoholics after a much shorter time of drinking than men and 20% of them had a history of depressions and disturbed childhoods. Kinsey had previously found that many women alcoholics had a background of a cold, rejecting mother, an indulgent father and a lack of preparation for adult roles. But, one of the reasons why alcoholism is such a difficult thing to study, is because for every generalised set of circumstances, it's always possible to find many other people who have been through the same situations and not taken to drink.

Rosie Boycott

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BRINGING HOME HATS & HANGING.

THE TORY PARTY WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

It's an old joke that women who attend Conservative Party Conferences are more interested in hats than politics. And at this year's annual Conservative Party women's conference the joke was in colourful evidence. About 2,500 women, mostly over 40, attended the conference which was held in the Central Hall Westminster on the 22nd and 23rd of May.

The prevailing atmosphere was one of mutual congratulations and back slapping - and although the ladies were often urged that 'this is no time for complacency', one wondered how many of them were really in London for the Chelsea Flower show, which was taking place quite near by.

'Last year', the chairman Shelagh Roberts cheerfully announced 'discussion was found to be so popular that this year we decided to have longer discussion sessions'. Discussion turned out to be individual people talking about totally different subjects for a limited time of 3 minutes. If they overshot the time, the harassed clock watcher under the rostrum began pressing red lights - 'And don't forget, no interrupting'.

Only two people spoke on the subject of women's rights - the general consensus of opinion being that the Conservative Party had done more than any other government for women. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, when replying to the issues raised also made the point that the Tories realised that 'many, perhaps the majority of you women here still want to have traditional married lives - and why not?' He was greeted with great bursts of applause and thankful sighs from the assembled gathering. South Devon's representative Sheila Cutts spoke gustily on the subject:

'A woman should have every right to intellectual freedom - I do not believe there should be a battle of the sexes... we are here to complement each other. 'We are not equal physically... a mother should spend all her time with her children. My husband's simply marvellous - even though we've been so busy on the flower farm - he really encouraged me to come today'.

'It's still true that an extra woman at a dinner party is awkward and to be an extra woman at a dance is a positive embarrassment.

'We should be in top jobs, it's essential. I've been trying for two years now to become an MP and let me tell you, it's been a real battle, but I'm fighting on'. The red light goes and to cries of 'Good Luck, Mrs Cutts,' she descends.

Perhaps the most saddening aspect of the conference was the demeaning attitude of the Tory women. They revelled in their servility. Late in the afternoon of the first session, Lord Carrington spoke, 'Ladies, where would we be without you - I know life has been hectic for you, but I

certainly have been impressed by how vigorous you've been today... think of the Tory party as your club - we are your servants and well, I think we're not doing too badly'.

Huge smirks of delight all round - just the sort of patronising rubbish needed to send them all scuttling back to the provinces for an energetic round of money raising garden parties and bring and buy sales.

Interestingly enough over some issues the Tory ladies are more right wing than their politicians. Capital punishment figured strongly in the debate - and although two people spoke out against it the woman who took the stand advocating its return stole the show and the hearts of the majority present. Robert Carr stated his own case - which hinged on the fact that as we now had 7,000 extra policemen and 6,000 standby civilians, the citizen was so well protected that capital punishment was not necessary. However, he gave no moral judgements, so possibly his sentiments lay in very different directions.

But whatever the women at the conference said and whatever they resolved it's unlikely that they ever have any effect on the government. The two resolutions passed were to further nursery education and to improve the public relations of the Conservative Party. Mrs Thatcher listened kindly to the first and echoed her agreement. Mr Barber several times made

the point that he was glad to hear everyone talk and to keep in touch. But it was all blind reassurance - the women are useful to the Conservative Party - they bring in the funds, work hard on a local level for no pay, canvas for votes and generally spread the word. It's a patronising and exploitative situation.

In the proposals for discussion several people had put forward motions against the tax credit scheme for issuing family allowances. The most strident objection came from Mrs Dean who moved 'that this conference views with alarm one of the Government's suggestions in the Green Paper, to add the family allowance to the man's income, being very well aware that a great many women will then derive no benefit and that the children in such cases will suffer hardship'.

However, Mr Barber saw it like this... 'Looking ahead, we have the biggest reform of all - the tax credit scheme.

For many years, social experts and tax experts have been aware that while our tax system had grown up with a whole set of complicated rules, to collect money, at the same time a vast system of social security had grown up with different rules to pay money out. So we decided to find a form of negative income tax which would combine the two systems and make them both simpler and fairer. First, tax credits will be



much fairer - it will give immediate help to many of the hard-pressed - pensioners, widows, the low paid and those with large families.

Secondly, the credits will be given automatically, there will be no need for means tests. And lastly, the scheme will be very much easier for people to understand.

I must say I was a little surprised at the criticism that the **Green Paper** was unfair to married women. That was certainly not our intention, and it is certainly not the case. Indeed, the proposals in the Green Paper would effectively continue the present situation. This is that when both husband and wife are at work they may in fact pay less tax than two single people at work. To pay married couples two single credits as has been suggested by some women's organisations would generally prove less favourable.

However, we acknowledged in the Green Paper that this alternative approach had much to commend it in principle. And I can say that if the Select Committee (at present considering the bill in the Commons) conclude from the evidence before them that married women should be treated on equal terms with their husbands and be eligible to come within the scheme, then we shall of course give the fullest and most sympathetic consideration to what they have to say' (see below).

A neat chatty way of avoiding the issues and one, judging by the smiles, that was quite acceptable to even Mrs Dean.

The conference moved to its end with everyone eagerly awaiting their beloved hero, Edward Heath. He began by re-iterating Robert Carr's claims that the Tories had done more for women than any other government... 'since 1971 we have done a great deal for women - the actual list of our achievements is too long to repeat here - so I will only give you two examples. Firstly the Guardianship of the Child Bill, which is at present going through parliament, and will give a woman equal rights over children. Secondly, pensions - the bill going through at the moment will greatly improve the situation. (see below).

The Prime Minister concluded by saying that over every issue the Conservatives had kept all their electoral promises and that now England was moving into its most prosperous phase. 'This is an achievement of the British people, but it has only happened under your government, the

Conservative government. Can we keep up the pace? - I believe we can - but it will need a continuing Conservative government to do it'.

An appropriate last sentiment to encourage the converted and to make sure it was notes and not coins that went into the collection bins.

Rosie Boycott

PENSIONS

The Social Security bill, which proposes to give women substantially lower earnings-related pensions than men, has been having a rough passage through Parliament. A full-scale campaign for women's equal pension rights was launched by Age Concern at the beginning of April, when the Bill was in committee stage. (Better late than never.) In only five weeks, 13,000 signatures were collected for a petition which Dame Joan Vickers presented to Parliament on 7th May. It demanded the following amendments to the bill:

1. The new state reserve scheme and occupational pensions schemes should give men and women equal pension rights for equal contributions.
2. In order to achieve equal pensions, men and women should get their pensions at the same age.
3. Since a full state reserve pension will depend on a full contribution record, people who work at home looking after children or dependent relatives should get a 'home responsibility' credit: that is, contributions to the state reserve scheme credited to them while they are not earning.
4. Widows should not lose their right to state reserve pensions if they remarry or cohabit.

During the report stage of the bill, when Edmund Dell (Labour, Birkenhead) proposed an amendment giving women equal pensions for equal contributions, the government majority fell to 12, despite a two-line whip.

Another amendment, enabling women to earn higher pensions by going on working after 60, went through smoothly. But otherwise the bill passed through the Commons unscathed. It now goes to the Lords. There has been such vociferous opposition to the bill's discrimination against women that prospects are good for getting some helpful amendments

through the Lords.

If the Social Security bill is not amended to give women pensioners a better deal, the campaign will shift its attention to the anti-Discrimination bill. If pensions are *not* excluded from the terms of that bill, then the government's new pension arrangements will have to be altered to give women equal pension rights.

Age Concern is at 55 Gower Street, London W1.

Women's Report

TAX CREDITS

In his speech, Anthony Barber indicated that he would not allow women to suffer financially from the introduction of tax credits (very generous of him). This is taken to mean that they will get some of the 'child credits' to replace family allowance. Officials from the Inland Revenue made it clear in their evidence to the Select Committee that if child credits are to be paid to any mothers at all, they will have to be paid to all mothers, for the sake of administrative simplicity. The women may only get half the child credits (the other half going to their husbands) which is clearly not enough, but is an advance on nothing at all.

Progress made so far can be attributed to the massive campaign launched by the Child Poverty Action Group and the Women's Liberation Workshop. On April 3rd, a petition signed by more than 300,000, urging that family allowance or child tax credits should be paid directly to the mother, was presented by Barbara Castle to the House of Commons. Birmingham Women's Liberation collected 20,000 signatures in two months, which were presented to Paul Dean MP on 18 April. The Family Allowance Campaign run by the Workshop, is still collecting signatures for its more strongly-worded petition and hopes to present them in July. An offshoot of that campaign, the Power of Women Collective, is now fighting for money to be

paid to all women who have 'home responsibility' and details can be obtained from the South London Women's Centre, 14 Radnor Walk, London SW4 (01-622-8495).

The Select Committee on the Tax Credit proposals has been deluged with evidence favouring payment of child credits to the mother, and opposing the entire scheme. The Women's National Commission told the committee that 'the proposal to treat the married woman differently and disadvantageously is contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Charter of Human Rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and to all the principles to which the United Kingdom subscribes'. The TUC has come down in favour of paying credits to the mother. Professor Nicholas Kaldor has pointed out that the vast sums needed to introduce the scheme - £13,000 million - will *not* be spent on the very poor, but on families with incomes over £1,000 a year.

On May 14th, the CPAG published the findings of its survey of families living on supplementary benefit, who will get no tax credits at all under the proposed scheme. Nearly half of them said they had suffered delays in the payment of benefit (which means they will be in a very bad way if family allowance is abolished and they have to rely on supplementary benefit as their only source of income). 41% of unsupported mothers interviewed, and 58% of married couples said that if they received tax credits they would not have to claim supplementary benefit.

One point that emerges strongly is that the tax credit system will not be as simple as the Government made it out to be. The major quality that originally endeared it to civil servants was its simplicity. So there's still a hope that the whole scheme may bite the dust.

Women's Report

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS REALLY DOING.

SPARE

a list of what you did to start the car, in what circumstances, more or less choke, pumping the engine, etc.

NB: A number of **Adult Institutes** run courses on 'Know your car' and classes in basic repairs.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Depreciation is one of the major costs of running a car. Time and money spent on cleaning and **regular servicing** is not wasted, but lack of attention will lead to enormous cost, damage to major parts, and constant frustration.

By carrying out minor repairs and routine servicing yourself, you can save yourself considerable cost, as garage labour rates now range from £2 to £3 per hour.

Check with your **handbook** for the precise requirements for your car, and follow these directions. **It will list all the parts that must be checked, and at what intervals.**

EACH WEEK
the following should be checked. This service should be free if you are also buying a fair amount of petrol.

Tyre pressures. Don't forget spare wheel.

Engine oil.

Battery level of distilled water.

Water in the radiator.

Brake and clutch fluid.

Lamp function.

Once you get to know your car, you should be able to check all these yourself.

NB: **Oil.** Check the oil level with the dip stick when the engine is stopped and the car level. Use the grade of oil recommended for your vehicle. About one pint per 500 miles is average. If you are using more than this, have it checked. Every 6000 miles you are well due for an oil change and filter clean. Don't always trust "Free oil change" as they won't necessarily drain and clean the filter, but will just change the oil.

Inadequate supply of oil can lead to an engine seizure. Overfilling will increase consumption and leakage.

Don't forget to **read** your **Manufacturers Handbook**. Also very useful, is the **Workshop Repair Manual** for your type of car, available from the dealer, from bookshops and most libraries.

CLEANING

This isn't just for looks, but a regular wash, every week or fortnight, is essential to remove dirt and grease that will corrode your car. It will also jam up components and provide a trap for moisture that will cause rust. Soak any caked mud or grit (special attention to the underside of the wheel arches) and spray down with plain clean water.

Dry the car and check all the areas where moisture tends to collect, and see that drain holes are not blocked. (Especially at the bottom of doors)

A polish every few months will increase the water resistance, but is less necessary with a new car.

RUST

When the car leaves the factory, the manufacturers could underseal the car as a protection against rust. However they don't. (Built in obsolescence?) If your car is fairly new, you can have this done yourself, and is

In the good old days", as my father used to say, "you could take it all apart, lay it out on the grass and have a good look, . . but now it's all sealed up, they won't let you get at it"

"They used to be done up by hand, so you could undo them by hand . . now it's all welded together . ."

Admittedly it is all now a lot more complex but it is true that more and more cars are becoming sealed and packaged goods with built in obsolescence.

As a result, some repairs are either becoming impossible, or very expensive on some of the new cars.

ie.. a number of steering wheels are sealed, don't have grease nipples that you can get at, so the whole car has to go in for service.

.. You can't push-start an automatic car, it will have to be towed away.

.. New rubbers for the wipers are very hard to come by, you will have to buy a complete new arm and wiper ... etc.

Cars are not only increasingly complex and expensive pieces of machinery, but also lethal weapons.

Regular care and service to your car will not only cut down your maintenance bill, prolong the life of the car, but also make it a little less lethal.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CAR

It is amazing that when you learn to drive you are not equally given some sort of basic instruction on understanding and

maintaining this extremely complex and dangerous machine. Quite apart from not even being taught how to park, if you do tentatively try to ask questions you are invariably fobbed off with "... you don't need to know that at this stage..." or "... well that will come later...", but it rarely does. When you buy a car, the flash salesman is very unlikely to mention all the repairs, problems and dangers that are about to face you once out of the sales room.

In 1971, an average of 21 road users were killed, and 944 were injured for **each** day of that year; and still millions of new drivers pour out onto the roads each year with virtually no guidance or knowledge on how to maintain this machine correctly and safely.

Read your handbook.

With your car you should get the **Manufacturers Handbook** that will give you a detailed servicing schedule of checks that ought to be carried out daily, weekly, and at approx. three monthly intervals. (If the handbook is not in the car, as is likely with 2nd hand cars, obtain a copy from the manufacturer or dealer of your model)

As with all literature on cars, these handbooks are written by men for men, assuming a basic mechanical upbringing and understanding, that is not, unfortunately, common to us all.

However, persevere and **read it**, (bearing in mind how many men are floored by electrical sewing machines...) as this information is essential for keeping your car on the road safely and not incurring unnecessary damage to parts, thereby contracting vast repair bills and nuisance.

TOOL KITS

Check that you have the basic tools required for emergency repairs.

Jack..make sure you know where it is, and how to use it.

Wheel brace..like a large crooked spanner, that fits nuts on the wheel.

Set of spanners..or adjustable spanner.

Screwdriver..large and small.

Spare fan belt.

Spare lamp bulbs.

Hammer.

Oil can.

Feeler gauge..this is used for checking details of sparking system. If someone is helping you with a roadside repair, they might need it..

Insulating tape.

Clean cloth..for windscreen.

Torch..important. Make sure it is working.

If you are the sort of person who tends to drive merrily past rows of garages, looking for one that gives quad stamps, when you know that you are about to run out of petrol, then buy

A gallon can of petrol, keep it in the boot, with a **Funnel**, just in case..

GET TO KNOW WHERE IT ALL IS

Again you can discover this with the help of the handbook, but, especially with a new car, just check that you know:

How to undo the bonnet..some modern cars have special anti-burglar devices that you have to unfathom.

Where the petrol goes in.

Where the water for the radiator goes.

Where is the spare wheel?

Where is the dip stick for the oil?

How to fill the wind screen washer container.

(this is crucial if going on a long journey)
THE DASHBOARD.

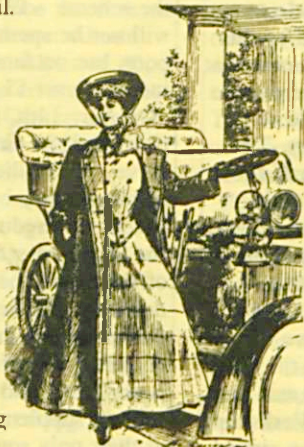
Make absolutely sure that you know what all those little lights are telling you. ie: Is it just that your headlights are on, or your seat belts off, or is it a serious warning light about, for example, your oil pressure or generator. In such a case, **don't ignore the warning lights**, but get straight to a garage.

In time, everybody gets to know the little idiosyncracies of their car, the rattles and knocks.. If you get a regular click, click, click that suddenly starts up, check the tyre threads for an embedded stone before dashing to a garage.

A steady rattle under the car often means a loose exhaust pipe. This will need re-welding. Apart from that, when you do go to a garage and they do something miraculous under the bonnet, ask **what and why**, next time you can do it yourself.

There is little point in my listing the millions of tips on starting your car on a cold morning, locating the cause of that rattle ..etc, as each car tends to 'do it's own thing'.

Get to know it, be systematic, even keeping



PARTS

worth the extra cost. Have it done by a reputable garage. **Rust will eat your car if you let it.**

Check the paintwork frequently for blisters or scratches. Rust tends to accumulate in the most inaccessible places, and out of sight. If you see small patches appearing, sand them down with a fine glasspaper and apply a rust inhibitor such as 'Kurerust'. If a number of bubbles or blisters show under the paintwork, it is worth having them all seen to in one go, otherwise you end up with a patchwork painted car. At the same time get the underneath of the car checked for rust, ie: the door bottoms, body sills, and wheel arches.

Having fully consulted your **Handbook**, you should be aware of all the servicing requirements and particulars of your car. Keep a record of the dates of each service, and of what was carried out. It is generally advised to have the car serviced by a firm that is a dealer for your make of car, as they will stock all the spares and have the special tools and knowledge. A Manufacturers **Service Voucher** book can be got from the dealer, that will give you some guide as to the approximate cost of each job..

CHANGING A WHEEL

You are unlikely to be faced with this job on a sunny afternoon, a few yards from home or a garage. **Tyres burst in ghastly conditions.** Three a.m., pouring with rain on a motorway is not the best place to learn to change a wheel for the first time. If you are nervous about this, and especially if you might be with small children who won't appreciate being stranded, then try to have a **practice session**, with a friendly mechanic or knowledgeable friend standing by.

1. Get the car off the road. As quick as possible, but the more you run the car, the more damage you will do.
2. **Never change a wheel near a drain ..** or the nuts and bolts can disappear fast.
3. **Brake on. Car in gear.** Put blocks against the wheels. Make sure the car cannot roll.
4. Take the **hub cap off**. Some unscrew, others lever off with screwdriver.
5. **Loosen the nuts.** Sometimes the nuts have been done up by a hefty mechanic or machine and you might have trouble undoing them. In which case stand on the wheel-brace or use a lever.
6. **Jack up the car.** The correct position for the jack should be in your handbook.
7. **Remove the nuts and put them somewhere safe.**
8. **Take the wheel off, put spare wheel on.** Some cars require you to remove the bolts as well as nuts to change the wheel).
9. **Replace the nuts (& bolts) and tighten.**
10. **Lower the car,** remove the jack.
11. **Tighten the nuts again.**
12. **Replace hub cap.**
13. **Get to a garage to check fitting and air pressure.** Have punctured tyre/wheel repaired as soon as possible.

TYRES.
NB: When buying new ones avoid 'retreads' or 'remoulds' as they are often dangerous and tend to just fall apart. You don't have to

pay full price for new tyres, a good offer such as '30% off new tyres' could just mean last years model, but perfectly good tyres.

GARAGES

Unfortunately, you have to approach them expecting to be cheated, and prepare for this. This is particularly so for unmechanically minded people who are unable to question a mechanic's statement. It is advisable to seek out an honest and reliable garage, recommended by friends. Try to state exactly what you want doing, not just "...could you check it..", or you leave yourself wide open for a massive bill. Your manufacturers **Handbook** will help you pinpoint the trouble and be specific. If you are leaving your car with them, also leave your phone No. in case they unearth an extra fault. Then they are obliged to ask your permission and quote a price, before carrying out the repair and presenting you with an unexpected extra charge. It also gives you a chance to check how much the repair should cost before agreeing to it. Always require an itemised bill. Labour costs, and material costs. The Consumers Association magazine **Motoring Which**, often gives useful advice on your legal rights as well as do-it-yourself tips and comprehensive surveys and reports on new models. The **Automobile Association** also provides a free legal advice service to members.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Steaming radiator: as often happens in bank holiday traffic jams; **don't** top up the radiator immediately with cold water. Ease off the cap bit by bit, wearing a glove or using cloth, otherwise you might get a jet of scalding water in your face. Let it cool down for up to half an hour before topping up, and continuing journey.

Battery: Never top up battery with tap water. Always use **distilled water**.

Brake fluid: Use **only** correct type of brake fluid for your car.

Raising the car: Never work under a car while it is supported only by a jack. Use large blocks of wood or an axle stand.

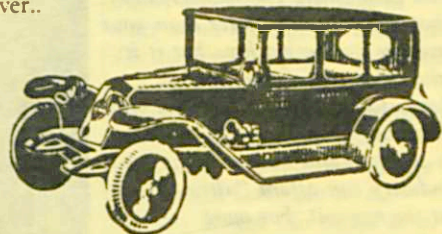
**AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB**

One of the best steps towards coping with life with your car, is to join either of these major Associations.

The AA covers, in some form or other, every aspect concerning your car. For a small fee you can get one of their engineers to come and inspect and advise on a car you are thinking of buying. They provide you with a **Members Handbook** full of advice, tips, maps, recommended hotels/garages ect.. They run a vast continental service, helping with insurance schemes, maps, camping facilities ect.

Their own insurance schemes are also reputed to be cheaper than most other firms. Their most well known facility is free service on the road. They operate patrols all round the country that you can call up 24 hrs a day, will carry out minor road-side repairs, or tow you to the nearest AA recommended garage.

(You will find that an AA mechanic will help an RAC member and vice versa) The only problem with this service is that these patrols are understaffed and it is not always easy to get help quickly. Of course this situation is at it's worst at peak traffic times.. bank holidays and in the summer when everyone is breaking down or boiling over..



Before ringing the AA from the road, **find out precisely where you are.** If they haven't turned up in an hour, call them again as they might have had difficulty finding you.

(The AA and RAC will **not** come and help you if your car is stuck, or won't start, when you are at home.

Membership £4.50 a year, plus £1.50 enrolment fee. For married couples the husband or wife can become 'associate' members for an extra £1.

IF YOUR CAR WONT START

there are so many things that could be the trouble. The AA booklet lists about 36 checking points.. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into this sort of detail, but their little booklet "**Know About Emergency Repairs**" is invaluable and with it you should be able to track down any fault and find out what to do about it.

Of course if it doesn't start, you could just check the petrol.. by rocking the car or by dipping a weighted rag or string into the tank (**never use a naked light to peer down into the tank..**)

Next, check the battery by switching on and turning on the headlights. If when you press the starter the lights dim, it means a lack of power in the battery. Must be recharged.

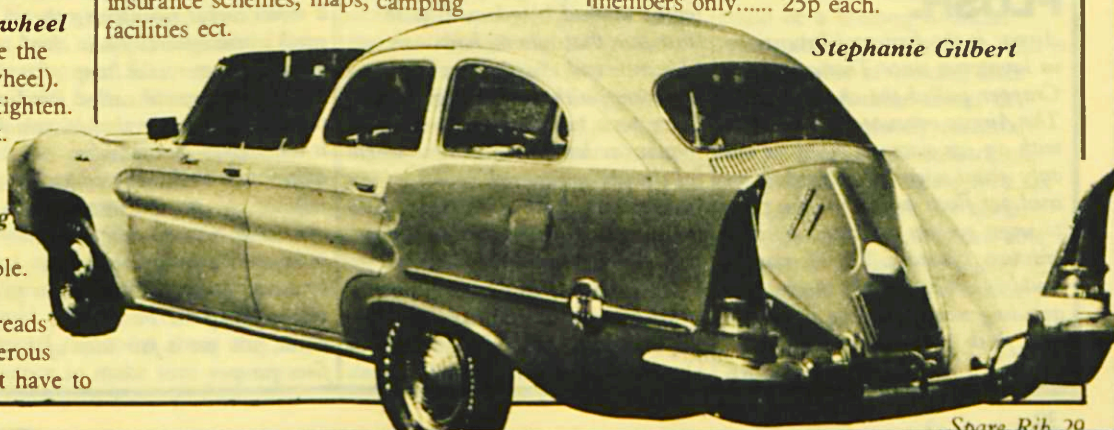
Next, obtain the AA booklets.

BEST BUY

"Know About Servicing Your Car"
"Know About Emergency Repairs"

Two invaluable, very understandable booklets published by the AA, available to members only..... 25p each.

Stephanie Gilbert



A HOT & STICKY SEW

A sewing machine has been invented which dispenses altogether with the needle and thread. Instead it sews with high frequency sound waves; heat from high speed vibration fuses fabrics together at the rate of fifty feet per minute. The ultrasonic vibrations generate heat by causing one piece of material to vibrate against another, creating molecular changes that melt fibres into each other. The makers claim that not only is it faster than your average sewing machine but it is also easier to use and stitches, hems, tacks, basts, pleats and slits. However the price of the machine is so exorbitant that only the industry can afford "ultra-sewing" at the moment. For more information contact Branson Sonic Power Company, Danbury, Conn USA.

PIGEONS ON THE PILL

In several large European cities the number of pigeons is being reduced by bird birth control pills, concealed in grain-sized capsules and scattered together with corn. It is true that large flocks of pigeons foul buildings and monuments with their droppings but it is questionable whether sufficient care is exercised in pigeon contraception. The pest control officers and their equivalents in other countries are supposed to remove all uneaten capsules and grain. But do they?

POP STOPS THE PECKING

In France rock music is being played to chickens raised in sheds on deep litter. This practice is still at the experimental stage, but there is now considerable evidence to suggest that the tunes have a soothing effect on the birds who stop pecking out each others anal feathers - a vice engendered by unnaturally crowded conditions.

STRAIGHT FLUSH.

Airvac is the first real invention in lavatories since Thomas Crapper pulled the chain in 1870. The Airvac evacuates the bowl with an air vacuum pump so that only about a quart of water is used per flush instead of the five to seven gallons consumed by an ordinary lavatory. The Airvac could be an important means of avoiding water shortage as we each flush about thirty gallons a day.



Woman with a Flea by Georges de la Tour (1593-1652). Fleas appear to prefer women to men which may well be linked to a liking for female hormones.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A PUBLIC MENACE

Fleas could claim to be the most important insects in the world as they carry the plague bacillus on their mouthparts. They were responsible for the deaths of 25,000 Vietnamese from bubonic plague during the recent hostilities. In reality many more are believed to have contacted the disease but the epidemic was kept quiet by the U.S. Army for "security reasons".

Fleas have hearts in their backs and a nerve cord along their front side and a throat which traverses their brains - an arrangement which seems strange to those who regard human anatomy as "normal". Male fleas also have the most complicated penis in the entire animal kingdom. It is so intricate that no one has demonstrated exactly how it functions, although photographs have been taken of that impressive organ (as long as the entire length of the abdomen) with sperm wound round the tip like spaghetti on a fork. Pairing can last a few moments or up to nine hours.

The mini-pill was tried out on fleas while it was still in the experimental stage. The rabbit flea has evolved such a close

relationship with its host that it responds to the sex hormones of the rabbit. These control its reproduction as well as that of the host and ensures that the two breeding cycles are synchronised. The mini-pill was just as effective on both mammal and insect, and the rabbit and flea ceased breeding together. When the pill was withdrawn their ovaries developed simultaneously and they once again took an interest in the opposite sex. Unlike humans, the female rabbit and the flea lose interest in the male when on the pill and rebuff the most ardent advances.

Recently (May 10th) at the Royal Society, fleas were shown jumping off a miniature perspex "hill" and developing an acceleration 20 times greater than a moon rocket re-entering the earth's atmosphere. Their chief source of power is a lump of rubber-like protein called Reselin incorporated in the thorax, which is compressed by muscular contraction and then suddenly released. If you can imagine a man with a sorbo rubber ball incorporated in his hip joint, bouncing himself off his knees to the height of the Post Office tower, you get a fair idea of how fleas jump.

As marriages become shorter and divorce more common, lawyers who earn their bread and butter helping couples legalise their separation, benefit more from the liberalisation of the divorce law than the people themselves. This need not be the case. If you are on sufficiently civilised terms with your ex-to-be you can dispense with the professional spanner in the works and get out of your marriage with as little fuss as you got into it, without the expense of a reception. In fact, a do-it-yourself divorce will cost you only £12.10.

The only grounds for divorce under the new laws are 'irretrievable breakdown of marriage'. There are, however, many different ways of proving breakdown and I am specifically discussing here what happens when a husband and wife have been living apart for two years and wish to divorce by mutual consent. It would be inadvisable to try and conduct your own case if there were any chance of disagreement over maintenance, custody of children or division of property.

Anna and Sam both recently divorced their respective partners; here they discuss the pros and cons of do-it-yourself divorce.

Sam: My divorce was on grounds of a two year separation. My wife consented quite willingly so either of us could have brought the case. I suppose I might have considered saving some of the £100 it cost us by conducting my own case but I really wanted a solicitor to act as an intermediary. Quite honestly at the time I knew I should make a complete break and my feelings towards my wife were such that it would have been heart-rending for me to have met her or to have written to her. In fact I wasn't sure how I felt about direct contact with her. Perhaps by the time I had to go to court it would have been alright to have done it myself.

Anna: The emotional climate is vital. If it is highly charged you do need some kind of go-between, but I maintain that you don't need a solicitor for this, he costs a lot of money. I had been to see a solicitor while we were still living together to find out what my situation would be if I just walked out. He advised me to keep a diary in case I needed to resort to using evidence. In fact I didn't need it but it is worth doing in case problems do arise. (The partner could contest the divorce at the last moment and documentation would be very useful if that happened)

For the first year after separating there were a lot of tensions. We

Do-It-Yourself Divorce.



saw each other quite a bit but I finally decided to make a break and not to see him again. By the time I started divorce proceedings a year later he was in Israel and the whole thing was done by letter.

It is a very academic point who divorces who as there is no longer a guilty party in law but somebody has to divorce the other so when Peter wrote suggesting we got things moving I started proceedings.

At this point there are two factors to watch for.

1) You cannot divorce until you have been married for at least three years.

2) The two years separation should be continuous. You are allowed up to 6 months of co-habitation with your husband during that period but those months (or days) must be added on to the 2 years.

Anna: In July 1972 I wrote to the Law Society Stationers (237 Long Lane, Bermondsey, SE1) in London explaining that I wanted forms for a two year separation, wife's petition (they cost 5p each and you will need two). They are sent with detailed instructions for filling them in. I then took the completed forms (with my marriage certificate) to the local county court for filing (Somerset House if in London). This costs £12.00. It was worthwhile delivering the forms by hand because the clerks at the court were very helpful and told me what I should do next.

After filing, the court kept one copy and sent the second, along with another form, to my husband. This was the worrying part for me. With Peter not being in England it might have been a lot of bother. I thought that the petition would have to be served by hand by the British consul. In fact this would only happen if Peter had failed to acknowledge service or had filled the form in wrongly. However I had to write a letter claiming all financial responsibility for delivery by hand should it be impossible to do it by post. Of course if, as in my case, the person is dying to receive it, there is no problem, but if they are difficult to find, the costs you personally could incur are frightening. In fact this was the only time I really felt worried.

Peter replied quite quickly and I was sent a copy of his completed form. At this point I was informed that the case was listed, then I just waited for 5-6 weeks for notice of hearing. Peter had nothing else to do.

This can vary, in some courts you have to apply separately for a hearing and fill in a Directions for Trial form. At each stage you would be given directions and you can always ask for advice when you hand the forms in at the court.

Anna: On the day the case came up I arrived early in order to see a few cases before mine. (You would be well advised to ask the clerk of the court about this in advance to make sure you are

allowed into the court.) It was quite an illuminating experience and dispelled a lot of my fears. The woman before me just burst into tears when asked to give her name. She seemed terrified of the legal process. In fact the only people who generated any tensions were the barristers. They seemed to think that their job was to make a drama out of it. In one or two really straightforward cases like mine they raked up evidence of cruelty, desertion or adultery quite unnecessarily. The law says that separation due to a period of time is all you need and it seems cruel to rake up evidence just to show that they were doing their job. The other people in the court were matter-of-fact about it and I decided that would be the best attitude to adopt.

Sam: My barrister kept to an absolute minimum but there was a certain amount of dramatisation by others. They rather reminded me of actors in a theatre, necessary in a theatre but not in a court of law. In fact the judge kept stopping barristers reading all the grisly bits, he had it all in writing and could read it anyway. All he was keen to ascertain in my case was whether there were any children and if so what provisions had been made for them. Once he knew there were none it was simple.

Anna: Yes, I found the judge extremely sympathetic, and I agree that the children were in all the other cases the prime consideration. When my case came up I told the judge that I wanted to represent myself and he said,

'Well we really like to help people like you who are conducting their own cases, so if you'd like to make yourself comfortable I'll just run through your forms'.

From that moment on the butterflies went.

The divorce itself was a formality, a question of checking forms. He noticed that I'd made a mistake, I'd filled the date in on my form 9 days before the official 2 years was up. When he commented on it I just explained that I'd been in a hurry to get things started but I had not actually taken them to the court office until the right date. The clerk confirmed this and the judge just ran through the rest of the form and said 'Well, that's alright. What do you want then?' I had to make a formal request.

'I am asking you to grant me a divorce on the grounds of two years' separation. The marriage has irretrievably broken down and my husband has consented to divorce'.

That was it. The judge wished me luck as I left the court. The decree absolute was granted 6

weeks later.

Money: This can be a big stumbling block, in this case more for Sam than for Anna.

Anna: The form I filled in had a section on maintenance and dependants. I said I wouldn't be claiming anything. In court I wasn't asked about money, only about Peter's plans for the future, where his home and his roots were. I said I didn't think he had any.

Sam: My situation could have been complicated by the fact that a wife can claim maintenance at any time until she remarries. I wasn't asked any questions in court about my wife's present life. The barrister simply made it clear that she would not claim.

However any woman is entitled to claim maintenance from her husband at any time irrespective of signing a statement to the contrary though this would be at the judge's discretion. The barrister had advised me of this problem and suggested that I should get her to pay at least part of the costs as visible proof that she was able to support herself adequately at the time of the divorce and for the preceding two years. This may be seen as grounds for refusing any future maintenance order. Theoretically a former wife can rise out of the ashes after years and claim maintenance and this situation would not be affected by my remarrying although she may be advised not to apply if I obviously couldn't pay. In fact my legal obligation to my wife extends (no matter who divorced who) until she remarries.

It is this assumed financial dependency which can complicate a divorce. This particular legislation was designed to protect the woman in cases where she had been contributing to the family in kind rather than in cash and where she was quite simply, in employment terms, being made redundant by divorce (the presence of children makes a different issue). If however the marriage has been short lived, there are no children and both partners worked outside the home during the marriage it seems quite unnecessary that a man should be landed with what could be a lifelong financial responsibility to a woman who is quite capable of looking after herself. With these things in mind it is absolutely essential that no one should embark on self help divorce unless they are quite sure of where the other person stands and they are able to make a civilised decision about their obligations to one another.

Angela Phillips

Radical Feminism rears its head..

Sara Maitland on this year's History Workshop 'Women in History' organised annually by Ruskin College, Oxford.



You should have known better." A great number of things, complementary and pejorative, have been said to me since I stood out with a number of other women at the Ruskin History Workshop on *Women in History* to complain on Feminist grounds about the content, the organisation and the approach of the Workshop to its subject; but in many ways this remark was the most illuminating, and oddly perhaps the most helpful. In its own context it is true: The Ruskin History Workshops are organised by Ruskin College, a trade union organisation, for trade union socialists, to study and discuss

history and historical methodology in a context where an exchange of knowledge, material and ideas are possible. The Workshop was not, did not claim to be, and could not be a Feminist Conference. We interrupted discussion of a paper by an eminent and respected Marxist historian (Christopher Hill, the Master of Balliol College, Oxford) at a Workshop organised for his particular line of discussion and we expected, demanded, a sympathetic hearing. Probably in that context, we should indeed have known better.

And yet. And yet, I believe we were right. I know we were right. It was not a question of knowing 'better', but of knowing 'Best'. Over three days of listening to talks of various standards on various topics, more or less related to women (and let me say that some of these were very good), the picture of 'Women's History' that we got, was that - surprise, surprise - although women were oppressed they, at times and in various ways were involved, both as women and as people, as heroines and as masses, in the struggle - the important, on-going struggle - for workers' rights, against poverty and capitalist oppression.

'I find the whole yarn pretty incredible. It is riddled with mysteries, and inconsistencies and unanswered questions. Even more damning than the unanswered questions are the questions that are never even asked, because as Professor Peter Medawar points out, "you tend not to ask questions until you can see the rudiments of an answer" because until then you don't know there is a question.' (That isn't actually me talking, it's Elaine Morgan in her book *The Descent of Woman*, but she was doing for Anthropology what I am talking about doing for history, and she says *exactly* what I want to say.)

What is more, she offers an explanation for the failure to ask the questions which show us the answers which pose the questions when she says: 'The trouble with specialists is that they tend to think in grooves.' This is most important and explains why we want, and presumably why the 135 women who signed our scruffy bits of paper want, a Women's History Conference, not to discuss just detail, but the unasked questions - method, approach, motive, use and others that I too, have not asked. Our protest was made after Christopher Hill's talk and this seems to me to have been the perfect timing. He perhaps as much as any man around, - and power to him - has been responsible for popularising a new method of

history, the Marxian dialectic approach, and he, almost more than anyone else that I can think of, ought to have been able to tell us *now* not just some funny stories (mainly at the expense of women) about sexual freedom in the seventeenth century, but about how to discover, develop, propagate and use a new sort of history, and it is just that that we want.

I am sure that the political rifts between the people who made the statement are deep, but on this issue we were able to get it together to say:

(1) that the organisation of the Workshop actively prevented a true dialogue about women's history from emerging.

(2) That it was obvious that the talks were all too often the result of side tracking, mere spin-offs, from the speakers' "real" work.

(3) That as there had been no discussion of the reasons why Women in History might be a useful or meaningful study, it was impossible for the facts that did emerge to be of any use to anyone except pure historians within the particular field of each talk.

(4) That the trade union socialist emphasis of the workshop distorted 'Women's History' to the point that the term was meaningless.

(5) That the most negative aspects of women's history were the only ones viewed and that positive triumphs and developments were ignored.

and (6) That what was needed was another, further conference that would discuss not just academic details but the whole purpose method and meaning of feminist history.

Since that weekend it has been said to me that such a conference would be an emotional mess of people searching for a propaganda line. I don't believe this, but even if I did I would still say that we must hold such a conference; that an emotional mess now, because it would at the very least be a different mess from the Ruskin Workshop, would be a step in the right direction, a new direction.

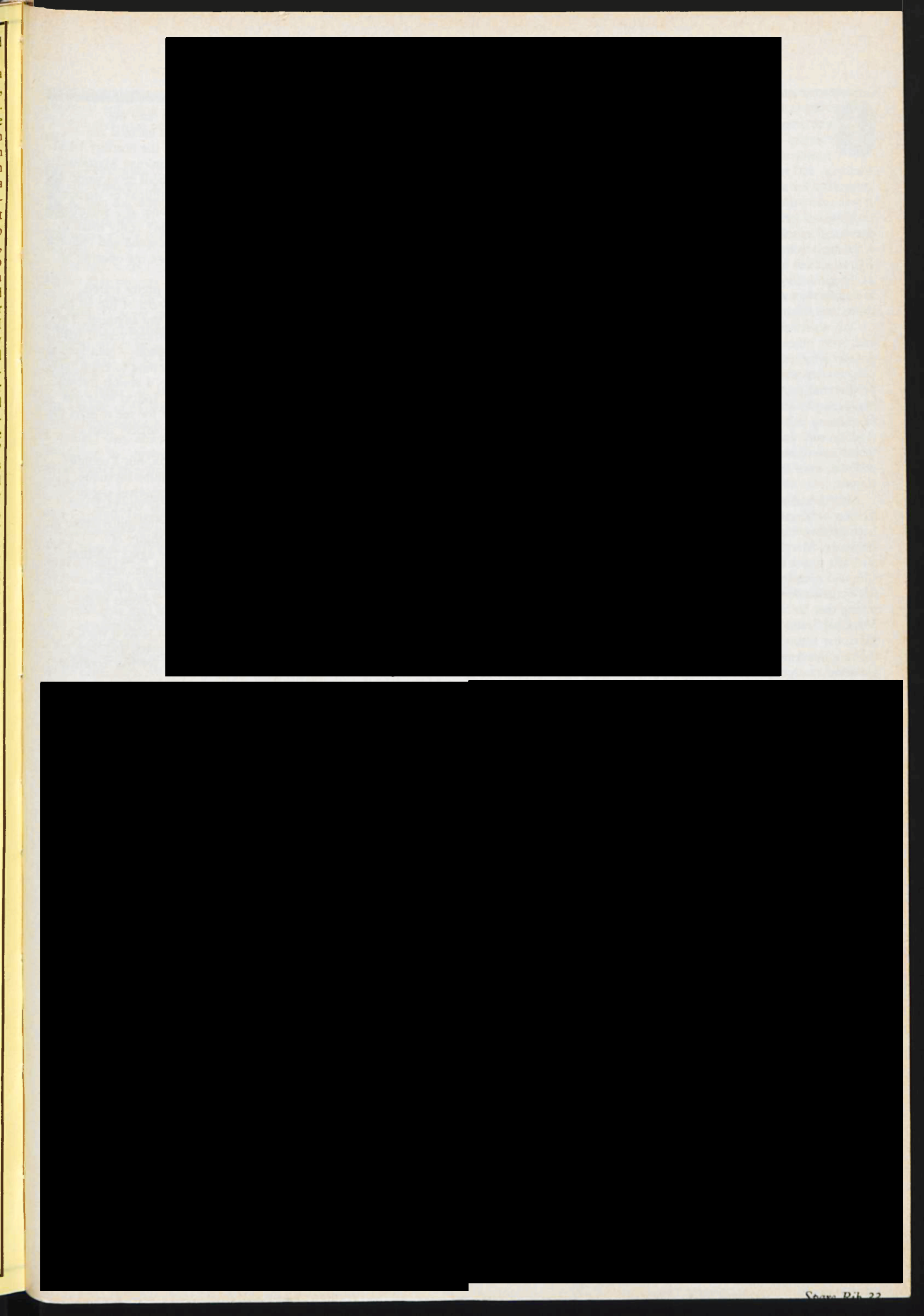
Women's history does exist. Some of it is a sordid story of oppression and subjection; some of it is Herodotus' myth-history of Amazon tribes in the Western Aegean, whose truth is being unburied by archeologists in Semele, Bodum and other places; some of it is individual beautiful stories of personal success, like Elizabeth Garret Anderson or Artemesia II (an Admiral in the navy of the Persian Conqueror Xerxes), some of it - as learned at Ruskin - is part of the Proletarian struggle; and some of it is part of the feminist struggle by women for women. It needs to be welded

into a whole, with a purpose, and it is for this that we must work.

Let me go back to Me. I am a nice Liberal-socialist, married, Christian, pregnant lady. B.A.Hons. Oxon. There are those who would call me, perhaps with some justice, a 'fellow traveller' in the Women's Movement. I am writing a biography of Sylvia Pankhurst; yes socialist, communist Sylvia, not her feminist sister. I went to the Workshop to hear a talk on her in particular, and the rest by the way, to broaden my approach, to learn more facts and where to find them so that I could write a better book. Yet at the end of the talk I had come to hear I was on my feet, blessed with a good loud voice and not needing the unobtainable mike (which was kept or removed from almost every would be Feminist speaker or questioner), complaining about the anti-feminist tone of Lucia Jones' highly competent talk which was precisely what I thought I had come to hear; passionately defending Christabel, her mother, her movement, and the other Votes-for-Women only ladies. Why? An hour later, at nearly midnight, I had a protest meeting composed mainly of committed Radical Feminists in my living room. Why? Because I realised then, at the Workshop, that the Workshop was unable to help me and those like me with our research, and that it was unable to help those who want, not to research, but to use research to learn more about themselves and about women as we were, are and might be.

The Workshop was not asking new questions, did not know that it should be asking them, was afraid (even paranoid) for some months before the actual weekend that it might have the questions thrust upon it. Not surprisingly it was not coming up with the answers. The people asking the questions and the people trying to answer them, must find a way of coming together that is more real and more sustained than the hour and a half that we had together last weekend. That way is not the pure academic one we were offered last weekend, but we must find it; probably our only hope of finding it is through our own Conference.

Feminist research in every field is going on. This research must be co-ordinated - one result of the Ruskin Workshop has been to expose our own failure: 'But we couldn't find women, who were doing the work' one organiser told me. An index is being put together and anyone interested should contact Gillian, c/o the Women's Liberation Workshop, 3 Shavers Place, London SW1.



Theatre Group would like to meet sincere borough council. Age immaterial, but preferably racially-mixed in origin and certainly not upper class. View to matrimony.

"Watch the Women" the Common Stock Theatre Company
photo: [redacted] (Report, London).

Naseem Khan talked to the group who put on "Watch The Woman", the collection of sketches on woman's role through the ages, (Spare Rib no.12) and discovered where they are trying to take theatre today.

First of all they thought of names like 'Community Theatre'. Hmm, a bit sort of...tired. Well, 'community' is what it's all about, isn't it? The idea that a group should work consistently as an organic part of an area. How about 'Area Theatre'? No. So eventually they got a dictionary and looked up 'community'. Among other definitions it gave the phrase 'common stock'. So that was it, the Common Stock Theatre Company. As a small but growing number of groups are beginning to feel, Common Stock believes that theatre should be more than a hit-and-run affair. Actors have been traditionally outside society; in earlier ages laws placed them in the same category as vagabonds. But now, believes Common Stock, it's time to come back in. It's a goal admits one of their founders, Chattie Salaman honestly, they're still quite a way from. 'What we're doing and what we want to do are two different things.' But it's still early days and they have time on their side.

Common Stock sprang out of a revolt last year of LAMDA teachers, who felt that the drama school was merely turning out actors, factory-like, for the established theatre. The group's founders, including Chattie, are all refugees from LAMDA.

She in particular is well-suited

by her background for popular theatre. She came to LAMDA after spending ten years with the Comédie St Etienne, a popular theatre based in an unglamorous town near Lyons. It's a bit like Nottingham, she said: about the same size and supported by light industry. The Comédie St Etienne was among the first to pioneer popular theatre in France.

At first they had no base at all, but were solely itinerant. They had however, one important advantage over English groups doing similar work. It's an institution called the Comité d'Enterprise'. In all factories or works employing over a hundred people, this body is obligatory. It's a workers welfare committee, usually run by the unions. So if a theatre group wishes to circularise a factory it merely contacts the Committee who are, said Chattie, inevitably more helpful than Personnel Relations departments run by management.

By using the Comités d'Enterprise, they managed to sell out seasons even before they started. Seats were cheap and block bookings usual: five shows would have cost around £2. Eventually ten thousand seats a season were sold. And the audiences, she said, were fantastic, far more responsive

than those for whom theatre was a common consumer-activity.

The shows they did made no concessions. They didn't water down material and try and sugar the pill with songs and dances. 'In fact, said Chattie, 'I don't think popular theatre necessarily has to be music hall. Anyone can become very absorbed in anything. People tend to be patronising and think that working class audiences aren't intelligent enough.' She herself was very struck when she did Pinter's 'The Dumb Waiter' in youth clubs. At first the audiences were intimidated; but once they realised that it was not a question of only the highly educated being qualified to understand it, they became fascinated and voluble. Again, in May 1968, the group took work into factories that had been stigmatised as over-intellectual ten years before in Paris. 'It went like a bomb.' She herself would like to do Brecht with Common Stock, Greek tragedies, 'Macbeth'.

All that is far from the group's present position. They started off in Whitechapel, which was the springboard for their first show. 'Tales from Whitechapel' based on kids tales of the area. They then had to move and settled temporarily in Islington. The

move produced their second show, 'Watch the Woman'. It's a medley of short sketches about woman's lot, interspersed with songs, roving from the Garden of Eden to a present-day housing estate. It's a likeable enough show, but it does show the tenuousness of its local roots. The group had hoped for far more contact with local women than in fact materialised and had hoped to be able to talk to women in prison.

What they want now, above all, is an area. They want time to settle in and to understand local concerns from the inside. Perhaps in the future boroughs will as a matter of course, put drama groups on their payroll. Their brief would be not only to provide good drama at an accessible level, but also to shape the feelings of an area into a dramatic form and present it back to an area. It's a Utopian thought at the moment. Meanwhile Common Stock are still hunting.

Naseem Khan

Dates and places where Common Stock will be appearing this summer.

Highbury Fields
 July 16th 7.00 pm
 Greenwich Theatre
 July 27th 8.30 pm

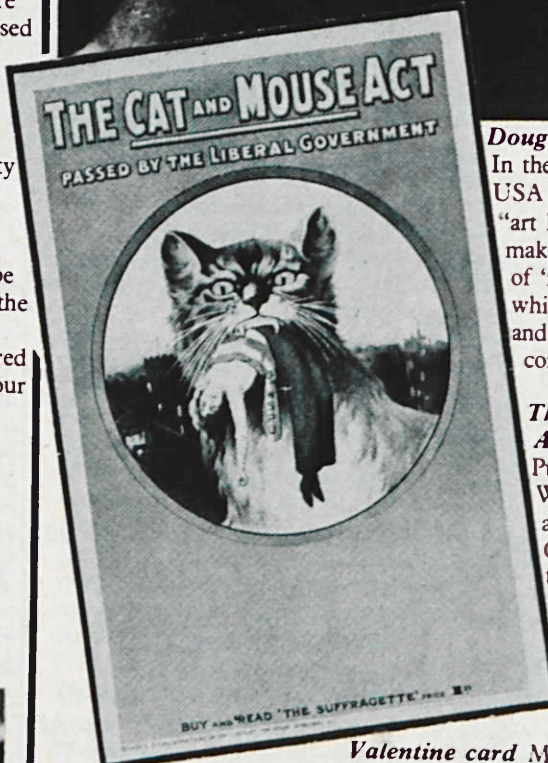
MUSIC

Teaching was the obvious option but positions were scarce and male applicants seemed to be preferred. Anyway, few of my women friends could see themselves as an authority figure like a college lecturer. One or two of us took training courses for primary school teaching. I was considering avoiding the issue of what to do by retreating into further education when I heard that two of my classmates, Gillian Darley and Fenella Crichton, had solved the apparently insoluble problem of finding employment by employing themselves.



Our advertisements met with an immediate but unexpected response. Countless women wrote asking if we could employ them. At that time there was no work for the three of us let alone for the rest of England's work starved women art historians. Later, on the occasions when there was too much work for us to cope with, other women college friends gladly accepted jobs. At one time half the women who had graduated with

There was also the author
who . . .



Published by the
WSPU in protest
against the
Government's
treatment of
suffragettes.



Valentine card Map of Matrimony

Persuasive Pictures.

Art and Society: Sex
by Ken and Kate Baynes
Welsh Arts Council and
Lund Humphries

We are what we see, Kate and Ken Baynes tell us in their exploration of the social function of art. Art "reflects, interprets and supports" our ideas about ourselves. They widen the definition of art to include everything from eighteenth century Chinese porcelain figures to male order false bosoms and the cover of Oz. In the fourth book of their series on art and society they compare society's attitude to sex expressed in the art of different epochs, emphasising how art shapes our view of the male and female role. For women who have been fighting the image of ourselves that we see reflected in advertising and the media, this book is saying nothing new. However, the subtle effects of art cannot be overstressed; as the Baynes write, "by celebrating certain modes of behaviour it outlaws others." ■

Wedding Dress

Possibly made at Whittakers in Bolton 1934 (Museum and Art Gallery, Bolton)
The Baynes say, "clothes, ceremonies and entertainments combine to point up the customary differences of behaviour and attitude expected from men and women." A dress which declares clearly that marriage can be a full stop for a woman.



Ofuku of Okame

"The goddess of mirth and eroticism grasping an old man's nose and laughing because it reminds her of a penis."



Poster by Reginald Mount

Published by HMSO, Second World War

Propaganda Sheet

Germany, Second World War, dropped over British troops.



WOMEN ARTISTS TAKE ACTION

Finally women artists are joining together, exchanging ideas and solving the practical problems which face them today. Male artists have always benefited from group activity; since the time of the Guilds through the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to the numerous predominantly male groups of our century such as the Futurists. It's a new move for women however, and the Women's Workshop of The Artists Union is proving how effective it can be.

In January 1972 a group of women artists met together at a studio in Southwark, where two of the founding members Elona Bennet and Tina Kean worked, to discuss joining the Artists' Union which was then in its formative stages. They believed that they should join the union as an organized group of women and so ensure that women's demands actually became part of the union's aims and plan of action.

The main activity of the Artists' Union is found within the workshops which are set up to deal with areas which members believe to be of special concern to artists. Workshops were initially created to cover education, art patronage and trade unions. The women's group succeeded in establishing a special workshop on women and they have been actively working in the union on that basis ever since.

The Artists' Union formed with the aim of seeking affiliation with the TUC and with this in mind they ratified a constitution and elected officers in May 1972. The Women's Workshop nominated members of their group for all positions in the union; Mary Kelly was elected union chairman and Carol Kenna and Margaret Harrison were elected to the Secretariat. Not content with having equal numbers of men and women as workshop convenors and officers, the group also demanded that the union should eventually aim to establish parity in the entire union membership.

Once members of the workshop were actively involved with the running of the union, women's issues were quickly brought to the foreground. Mary Kelly described the general reaction, "the women in the union were always supportive (not all of them are members of the workshop) but the men were sometimes suspicious and heated debates ensued". Nevertheless, a majority vote established "to end discrimination in the arts" as one of the union's major aims. And resolutions were passed supporting the women workers occupation at Fakenham and the Night Cleaners Campaign. While on a practical note the women succeeded in having "Do you need creche facilities" printed on union membership cards.

The Women's Workshop are seeking to establish links with women's sections in other unions, and they have a variety of impressive schemes for improving women's position in the art world. They plan to pressurise local councils into providing much needed studio space for women with

children. They want to ensure that exhibitions put on by public galleries and national museums now include equal numbers of women artists. And they believe that retrospective exhibitions and historical surveys must include the work of women artists. We should all join with them in demanding that the Tate Gallery puts on the show "Old Mistresses" (the exhibition of female old master painters previously held in Baltimore)

Women artists' difficulties start at art school where nothing is done to encourage them to see themselves as potential practising artists or teachers. The female staff are nowhere near proportional to female students so the workshop is calling for an anti sexual discrimination clause applied in the hiring of art school staff. And they think that art school attitudes towards women students should be thoroughly investigated.

The workshop membership is about thirty but the average attendance is a manageable eight. They discuss the problems facing them as practising artists and they view slides of each others work, building up a strong sense of solidarity. Tina Kean described how stimulating she finds their meetings, "I get the feeling that I must go away and do something, instead of just thinking about it".

Members who discovered that they shared similar ideas formed affinity groups and started three different projects.

Su Madden, Alexis Hunter, Sonia Knox and Linda Price are working on "Project Woman House" based on an experiment which has been done by women in Los Angeles. They plan to work intensely for some months in a derelict house using it as both a studio and meeting place, and finally opening it to the public.

Jane Low and Tina Kean are working on "Playground Projects". Jane is designing an environmental piece for children to play in at 123 Dartmouth Park Road, while Tina is planning an environmental piece for both children and adults at Victoria Park.

Kay Hunt, Mary Kelly and Margaret Harrison are working together on a documentary about women sheet metal workers in Southwark factories, exploring the experiences of women doing so called man's work, their working conditions and the significance of the Equal Pay Act for them. Eventually they will assemble an exhibition out of photographs and interviews with the women. "Spare Rib" plans to follow up this introduction to the workshop with descriptions of the progress of all these projects.

Women artists have less to lose and much more to gain from creating an alternative to the present art world, so we can expect a lot from a union with women active in it. Anyone involved in the arts who wishes to join the union should contact The Secretariat, The Artists Union, 12 Carlton Terrace, c/o The I.C.A. and for information on the Women's Workshop contact Tina Kean, 60 Oxford Gardens W10 ■

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN.

The blankets woven by the women of the Navajo Indian tribe are the latest examples of women's work to be recognised as art as well as craft. The skill and artistic ability of the women was revealed in the exhibition "The Navajo Blanket" held at the I.C.A. last month. The show covered the years from 1795 to 1900, a period when the women continued to weave their strong vibrant designs in the face of subjugation and persecution from the white man.

No blankets are identical as the women never made preliminary drawings. They worked under direct inspiration from the mythical Spider Woman, and religious ceremonies developed around the weaving. If a woman tired at the loom she had to make a sacrifice to her spindle, and little girls had spider webs rubbed on their arms and hands to insure that they became strong weavers. The Navajo are very musical; they had specific ceremonial chants for each phase of the weaving.

The blankets were never used as rugs. They had special meaning for the wearer; the designs reflected both the identity of the wearer and the weaver. The blanket was wrapped around the body with one focal point of the design lying on the centre of the back and the other formed in front where the two ends met, with the pattern emphasizing the strength and the pride of it's owner.

The blankets were admired and sought after by other tribes. Weaving was not restricted to a few gifted people, all of the Navajo women were artists. Their creative freedom reflected the matriarchal nature of the tribe; property was owned in the woman's name, and the family line was



traced through the woman.

Navajo women still weave but the work has lost its religious and social significance, and the blankets have become rugs for tourists. While crossing the Navajo reservation in Arizona the only handloom I saw belonged to a woman who sat silently weaving beside the road. Her husband was asking for money from tourist photographers ■

For information on the Navajo read:
Ruth M. Underhill The Navajos.

Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956

John Upton Terrell The Navajos: Past and Present of a Great People. New York: Weybridge and Talley, 1970

Mary Hunt Kahlenberg & Anthony Berlant Catalogue for "The Navajo Blanket" Praeger Publishers Inc. (I.C.A. May-June 1973)



photographs: The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles, California.

Angela Phillips:
The difference between
a man and a woman
by Theo Lang
Sphere 45p

Reviewing this book has been a painful business. I could only manage to read very small sections at a time before my sight became clouded with rage and I was forced to put it down and turn to less irritating matters. The back of the book gave me a fair indication of what was to come; 'A woman's intellect is inferior to a man's - not because she is enslaved in a male dominated society but because she has a smaller brain.' The cover goes on to say that the author Theo Lang, 'dismisses all discussion on the subject of which sex is superior - there is neither inferior nor superior, only a difference.' I agree with him there but he quite patently doesn't mean it, the book is peppered with unsubstantiated 'evidence' of the inferiority of women written in such a patronising style that even the few things women have in their favour (according to him) are made to sound like amusing weaknesses. In all, his book is not about men or women, it is about the way in which he feels that women should complement the lives of men. I will give you a few quotes, you can judge for yourselves.

'Which design male or female is more beautiful?' He wastes 3 pages discussing this, only using quotes from men and coming, obviously, to no conclusion except that women are not really concerned by what their lover looks like! On the subject of that old bogey, Penis envy. 'In abnormal cases such feelings can be so intense as to cause persecution mania. In less exaggerated form they might spur a woman into rebellion against the supposedly inferior status of women in society: even (horror of horrors) stimulate some women into such ambitious political activity that she might, as President Nixon has publicly speculated, become president of the United States.' He continues by informing us that Feminists are all suffering from penis envy although we don't recognise it as such. Presumably because we aren't as clever as him. Now for a real beaut, 'If girls suffer from penis envy, why it has been asked, do not boys suffer from breast envy?' He reasons that this is because boys do not notice breasts until they are big enough to accept them as exclusively female. Maybe it's something to do with female eyesight, but I would have thought that breasts were rather more easy to see at every stage of life than penises ever are to those who don't possess their own. He suggests that the higher incidence of jealousy shown by infant girls at the arrival of their younger siblings might explain penis envy. Perhaps he doesn't know that younger siblings are sometimes female, which rather destroys that theory. I could go on for ever recounting his arrogant dismissal of a regiment of talented women writers producing work that is eloquent and charming, sometimes even of literary importance.

It is time a woman wrote a book which itemised the ways in which men do not come up to standard, our

standard, perhaps then it might dawn on men such as this one that there is no such thing as objectivity, that standards of art have always been set by men, that women's work is always derided and regarded as inferior. When we are the judges the highest points will go to the person who designs a house fit to live in, not the man who builds the highest tower. Perhaps then women's work will be seen in its true perspective.

John Gorman:
The Baby Trap
Ellen Peck
Heinrich Hanau 75p

Ellen's book should send men flapping in their eager hordes onto the operating table, telling the surgeon to snip away and make a vas(t) deferens in their lives. So that they, nights-in-amour bound, can then either gallop full hilt, lance at the ready, into the women of the world without fear of cramping their style or living room with the patter of tiny mouths. But before the surgeon raises his sword, for that fateful and final lunge, stay his hand and think for a moment.

There is not the least doubt that far too many marriages are wrecks - and Ellen certainly cites enough examples and produces plenty of expert evidence to lay the blame firmly and snugly in the cradle. After reading chapters like 'The Manufacturer's Trap', 'The Media Trap', 'The Cultural "Babies are the Most Important Thing in Life" Trap', warning us of the hazards I'm inclined to say that anyone who still falls for these crap

traps deserves the cot they lie in.

I would certainly agree with sex before children, it's unfortunate one tends to lead to the other. I would say a man, and I suspect a woman, would prefer 1,000 fucks to a child. Let's be honest with ourselves and admit it. I'm not advocating we do away with the children we have. I'm strongly against the doll-baby chain with which we bind women. And we'd all agree that life would be different, though arguably better, without children. There is the husband, Ellen tells us, stuck in a job because with kids and a mortgage, he's frightened to risk a change. And there is his wife stuck at home with the kids suffocating beneath a mountain of childish trivia. Yet I didn't find her case too convincing.

'... one husband on his fifth marriage had come to the conclusion, "when I see that my wife is thinking about kids, it's a sure sign something is wrong" ...' - but could it be him? '... marriage should not signal a settling down but a waking up. ...' - I agree, whether you decide to have children or not.

'... she used to be more relaxed. She used to be more fun. ...' So?

She attacks couples who've had children saying '... they lived in patterns, birthdays, anniversaries, religious holidays, get the paycheck, errands, holidays, pay the bills, retirement, disintegration. ...' That sort of pattern could apply to anyone - even the Pope. Ellen implies you can only have a good time if you don't have children - but does all human unhappiness stem from them?

She offers two reasons for a volun-

tary childfree lifestyle.

1. An awareness of ecology and the problem of the population explosion.

2. A desire for wider personal experience. ...

I agree wholeheartedly with her first statement. As she points out '... During the past 150 years ... the rate of extermination of mammals has increased fifty-five-fold. If the killing goes on at this pace, in about 30 years all the remaining species of mammals will be gone. ... And there are plenty of these cold hard facts to shake the foundation of any seemingly stable family. I feel that concern for what's left of the world's resources must now come first, well before a couple's 'need' for children. It is an act of gross irresponsibility for couples to ignore the present day facts of life - a dangerous increase in world population against a devastating decrease in resources - each day brings frightening news of another world shortage. But you try telling that to people. Well, at least Ellen is trying, though sometimes her fear seems to be that there might not be enough left to satisfy her and her childless friends. For dad to have the den of his dreams we must fell the mighty oak, kill the fattened calf, shoot the fake Zebra, reap the rye (what he does with his woman is his own affair). ... we picnicked on truffle-spiced ham ... we tasted black chabertin wine in a cave. And then there are '... the Bradens who live in a Greek modern house (with pool) overlooking Beverley Hills. ... Gail arrives in a Fiat and doesn't look at the prices on the menu. ... Marcia spends just under 100% of her salary on clothes. ... a lawyer ... "dates" his wife; they live in a fun-fun style that is close to that typified in Playboy magazine. ...

'All this resource-consuming, jewel-fu, well-massaged, jet-setting life against the value of one sweet child' I hear yelled from every family whose income is ever being weakened by price rises caused by the world's shortage. All this hardly supports her original promise and yet looks like the only way she suggests to have wider personal experience.

She offers no constructive method of making people realise what's at stake. In her list of 'common feelings that are assumed to lead to childbearing. ...' she should add a fourth, 'women have babies because they know no better'. If only she could have suggested a few ways that could be included in the educational system it would help couples to realise they do have a choice - they can reject the media's call to reproduce and thus not keep production and therefore profits on the increase. There is a very good chapter on birth control. It's concise and informative without being pregnant with medical terms. She would like to see contraception available in schools, the Pill dispensed from slot machines - all very necessary if we are to have our brave new world free from Orwellian predictions. Well, men you've had your think and though we don't have to agree with the way Ellen has presented her case we must accept certain responsibilities, so close your eyes and tell the surgeon to strike while the iron's hot.

John Gorman's wife had three children before he decided to have a vasectomy.



Sally Alexander The Militant Suffragettes Antonia Raeburn Michael Joseph

The Militant Suffragettes is a detailed record of women's struggle for the vote from the formation of the WSPU in 1903 until the sudden deflection of women's energies into the 'war-effort' in 1914. Antonia Raeburn's sources are personal reminiscences and contemporary accounts and when she allows these to speak for themselves, the result is a compelling and intensely moving account of those years.

Most readers will be vaguely familiar with the story of the suffragettes. What is extraordinary is the violence and bitterness of the struggle they waged. The violence was both physical and psychological. Women speakers were thrown off their soap-boxes; on demonstrations they were beaten up and trampled to the ground by the police; in prison they were cruelly force-fed. On Black Friday in 1910 many women were raped by plain clothes policemen, and at least 2 women died as a result of injuries sustained that afternoon. The police and prison officials were primarily responsible for inflicting violence on the women, but they were acting on instructions from the government. State brutality was not discriminating. Women of all ages, and from all backgrounds risked assault and serious injury when they ventured out on a demonstration, although the treatment of women in prison was determined by their social status and political influence.

Few men bothered even to pay lip service to women's equality. The primary reasons for the rejection of

women's suffrage among MPs was fear of female dominance, which was justified by the dogmatic assertion that a woman's place was in the home etc. Asquith went so far as to tell the House of Commons that woman is a distinct and inferior species like a rabbit and is therefore naturally disqualified from voting. Forcible feeding caused amused titters in the House, when it was first introduced. The "Woman Question" was consistently ridiculed and denigrated both in parliament and in the press.

Sadly, Antonia Raeburn is not a feminist. Perhaps because her enthusiasm for the cause is a little dim, she offers few comments or observations of real interest or value. There is no analysis of the divisions within the movement, and the opportunity to raise and discuss issues which are still vital and relevant for all women today is not taken. When women unite to confront the male dominated state then class and sex boundaries - usually so scrupulously observed - overlap, and the result is confusing and complex social conflict. Some of the extracts from the women's own personal stories reveals their involvement in these questions - but Antonia Raeburn chooses to ignore them. She does not attempt to dispel the conventional image of the suffragette as a middle class rebel, who absurdly and temporarily adopted extreme and misguided tactics in the pursuit of her limited end. It is difficult to believe that the book was written at the same time as the flourishing of the Women's Liberation Movement in this country. For these reasons, Militant Suffragettes is a disappointment.

Veronica-Jane Birley: Combat in the Erogenous Zone. Writings on Love Hate and sex Ingrid Bengis Wildwood House, Paperback 95p

The other day, an elderly gentleman asked me what I was writing about. I passed him my well-thumbed copy of *Combat in the Erogenous Zone*, Ingrid Bengis's 'Writings on Love, Hate and Sex'. He looked at the extracts on the back cover on man-hating, lesbianism, love and the absence of love. He leafed thoughtfully through the pages. Then he handed the book back and said: "You know, I find these people who are always complaining about the problems of sex a crashing bore. What they need is a bloody good orgasm." It was the traditional male response. But I couldn't help feeling that in this case he was somehow at the heart of the matter.

"It seems to me," writes Bengis, "that I am always coming up against variations of the same things." And it seems to me that her book is condemned, there and then, out of her own words. The nub of her self-examination has been asked before. "To be or not to be, that is the question." To fuck or not to fuck, to love or not to love. My own spontaneous reaction is: fuck, love and be damned! But this, apparently, is what Bengis cannot do. She has opted for Hamlet's alternative to action, who "Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words, And fall a-cursing." To use her own term, she is immobilised. It is sad but no surprise to learn that she has lived her last three years "in near complete chastity".

But you object at once, why are we talking about her? Isn't this meant to be the review of a book, not it's author? Yes, all right. Let me tell you about the book. It is an honest, open and brave tale of one woman's encounters with sex, love and hate, with women and men. It is a collection of personal histories about the fucks and loves the author had and didn't have, and the fathomless hatreds of men. Bengis writes freely and, with overwhelming generosity, lays out for public examination the 'secret' side of herself. As an author, her greatest quality is courage. The courage, if not to fuck and love, at least to publish and be damned.

Sprinkled among the accounts come the analyses. Bengis looks hard at her

childhood, her parents, her upbringing. Having put herself on the psychologist's couch, she also tries to put herself in his chair. Regrettably, she proves an honest talker but a poor listener. Having plunged so deep within herself to talk, she rarely succeeds in surfacing to make wholly impartial comment. She gets trapped within circles, "always coming up against variations of the same things".

The events and feelings Bengis describes are familiar to every woman. The childhood love affair with another little girl, and its attendant guilts. The boiling rage when a man on a train puts his hand up her skirt. The hazards of sex with married men, the questions of sex without love and love without sex. The deep affection with other women that leads her, inevitably, to wonder, am I a lesbian?

All these experiences I have had, or could well have had, in common with the author. They are familiar to womankind. Why then don't I empathise and feel with her? Her bewilderment, her indecision, even her immobility, I understand all too well. It is the analyses that lack objectivity, the arguments that are shaky, the projection of her situation on to all women that does not ring true. Instead of identifying, I analyse her.

Bengis herself says: "I am obsessive about the problem and cannot be relied upon for any objectivity." Bengis herself remarks of her responses: "That is not true of everyone. It is true of me." But in contradiction with this attitude, she does draw conclusions about other men and women, about love, hate and sex. It is these conclusions that go awry.

Even so, dotted among the rambling accounts and endless, unanswered questions in *Combat in the Erogenous Zone*, appear occasional golden nuggets of truth. The book is worth reading for these odd stray nuggets alone. If her writing lacks discipline, if truths are found buried in the midst of lengthy paragraphs, where one might well miss them altogether - it is perhaps because the author herself has missed the truth in them.

Thus the book emerges as one woman's personal experience. It sets no standard or yardstick, it leaves no guidelines for other women. It is one woman's attempt to struggle with the dynamics of a human vicious circle.

Mandy Merck & Jane Caplan: Forgetting's No excuse Mary Stott Faber and Faber, £2.95

Mary Stott is a former Guardian Woman's Page Editor who joined the campaign for women's rights two years ago and now is about the most active 'retired' person you'll ever meet. *Forgetting's No Excuse* are her memoirs. In them we observe the development of an instinctive feminist, with each chapter contributing some telling detail: the agony of the 'pasty, lank-haired, charmless girl with glasses and big feet; the fury at being dragooned onto the woman's page as an aspiring cub reporter of 19; the despair of the excellent sub-editor allowed to do the job until she got too good at it ('We have to safeguard the succession, Mary, and the successor



Photo: John E. Cain

has got to be a man'); the dignity of the widow who dredges up the resources to continue alone, and then turns her sorrow inside out to help others in the same predicament.

Mary Stott is a strong woman who created her own strength, a woman who really likes women in a generation of lots who don't, a prime example of sisterhood and what the blurb calls the 'down-to-earth' campaign for women's rights. Yet reading her book can be absolutely frustrating. Sample these remarks:

(On her grandchildren) 'I would not exchange these little girls . . . who represent the continuity of life, for a whole string of lovers and freedom from ties. Make of that what you like, Women's Lib.'

(On the nuclear family) 'The overt joys in fact, did outweigh the secret miseries which now have insisted on being revealed. The deficiencies have all been compensated for, the scars healed over; the roots have never withered. I am very thankful to have grown in a nuclear family, a family so strongly attached and so mutually supportive.'

(On the efficacies of reform) 'The educators among whom I would like to be counted and the reformers who trudge patiently and unremittingly through boring democratic processes are essential in setting the people free.'

(On marriage) 'To explain why marriage is important to me is almost as difficult as to explain to a blind man the colour of a rose. It involves trying to explain tenderness and the gradual integration of two personalities so that each draws from and gives to the other what he or she needs. Halving trouble, doubling joy - how absurdly trite it sounds. But now I am alone I know that like most truisms it is true.'

So what's wrong with the above? Well, for a start, are most truisms (especially the ones about marriage, the family, the continuity of life) all that true? Are biological and emotional ties necessarily incompatible with a non-monogamous life-style? Do the joys of living in a 'supportive' nuclear family inevitably outweigh its isolation, the division of labour which makes it an efficient server of capitalism, its withdrawal of the child-raising and 'domestic' services from a socially beneficial and rewarded sphere to a private (and male dominated) one? Does the British political system offer sufficient

'democratic processes' even boring ones, for 'setting people free'? And can people ever be freed by anyone but themselves?

These aren't ideas we suddenly thought up for this review. They have been discussed, rethought, investigated, and deeply argued by the women's liberation movement for several years. Mary Stott, a participant in national and international women's conferences, an active force in the campaign for the Anti-Discrimination Bill, and a lynch pin of Women in Media, gives them rather short (and superficial) shrift in her book. *Forgetting's No Excuse* is troubling. It takes women's oppression seriously, but not, we fear, the theories which women have developed to counter this oppression. Economic independence, non-violence, an end to sex-roles: like Mary Stott, we are instinctively attracted to these ends. Unlike her, we think achieving them will take a more specific political programme than 'social justice, government by consent, and international brother-(sic) hood'. None of us (another truism) have found the answers. But we'd urge Mary Stott to join women in the search.



Marion Fudger

To a greater or lesser extent, music is a part of our lives. Over the past twelve issues we've had articles on the Stones, Bessie Smith, the all female group Fanny and there have been regular reviews and record advertising. It's about time records were put into the context of the music industry as a whole. Of the many interdependent components which make up the music business today, we start this month with a look behind the facade of record companies.

Never ending streams of amateur musicians still believe the music industry is a glittering world of opportunity. Failing to recognise the reality of their million-to-one chances, they struggle to pay on HP for the all too necessary mounds of equipment. For female singers or musicians life is still harder, few break the traditional barrier of having to sell sex along with their musical ability. There are countless would be soloists trapped in trio's as studio backing, merely reinforcing the women-supporting-men image. But what happens to the comparatively few who make it? Assume a group have been discovered by the A & R (artists and repertoire) dept. of a major record company. A deal is discussed - percentages, number of L.P.'s per year etc., and the contract drawn up with the small print somewhat less suspect than in the Beatles at the Cavern days. Tapes are made in the studio and then pressed into the record. The group is now Product along with their records. Next stop the press office (consisting mainly of women though the bosses are usually men), whose job is to take flattering photos, write biographies and enthusiastic blurb on forthcoming releases and tour dates, posted regularly to music papers and potential reviewers. Agency is found to book live appearances - some companies have their own, ever noticed the package deal tours of the same company groups? Also management, who look after, hire roadies, P.R. and depending on the act's status, provide heavies. Some realise the importance of trust and a close working relationship but on the whole managers are notoriously unpleasant, their limit of understanding stretches as far as their wallets. Their product suffers strain along with the internal conflict of conforming to a set image. The record goes to the product manager, who decides the advertising scheme, on to the creative services who design a marketable cover and then to the promotion dept., which houses the pluggers. It is their sole aim in life to get the record played as often as possible on the BBC, local radio, TV, Luxembourg, disco's etc. This is done by socialising with radio producers, D.J.'s and the like. Their alleged methods have been described with great relish by the News of the World, no doubt a book exposé of 'the real truth behind it all' is in the pipeline. 'Nuff said I think by today's Evening Standard headline - "BBC BRIBERY - NINE ARRESTED". Back in the sales dept. the manager briefs the area sales managers, who send out armies of reps to the shops with information,

posters, leaflets and stickers and return with orders. Smaller one or two label record companies use larger ones like EMI for distribution. In the company depot, telephone salesgirls are ready to prompt re-orders, whilst the marketing division controls the number of records pressed. In spite of all this, at any one time 10 - 15% of the top twenty records are out of stock. Meanwhile the press office are busy together with artist's relations (yet another dept.) arranging interviews and a press reception for the group. Receptions vary from flash do's costing £1000's at the Savoy, London Zoo, or even taking over a Circus, to a small time booze up in the studio. Always just behind the development of the record is the tape dept., all material is put on tape and is marketed through the same channels. The initial sales figures start coming in approx. two weeks after release.

There's no high pressure release valve for those who keep the wheels of this vast machine turning. Bosses breathe down their necks demanding results as the competition between companies becomes more cut-throat. The turnover of staff is high, the pay low, the hours long, and wrong decisions on the part of the A & R dept, management or parent companies all contribute to increased job insecurity. Women, for the most part, are on the secretarial and assistant level. Although Arthur R. Taylor, President of CBS, instructed his company by letter, to ensure that there were equal facilities, pay and opportunity in all divisions, it is time and continuous pressure that are necessary to change a woman's lot within this hierarchical industry.

"The Singer" Liza Minnelli C.B.S

In suitably cabaret show-biz style Liza (with a Z) Minnelli blasts forth with another L.P. This one relies on big band versions of well known material and covers Carly Simon's 'You're So Vain', James Taylor's 'Don't let me be lonely tonight', Stevie Wonder's 'You are the sunshine of my life' and more. It must be the impact of her recent TV show in Britain, her Oscar winning role in 'Cabaret' and performances at London's Festival Hall, Palladium and Rainbow which prompt people to acclaim her as a 'super star'. I admit this could be true as far as her powerful performances on stage are concerned, she has a personality which try as I might, I cannot divorce from her mother's neurotic dynamism, but it's only a shadow. As a singer with older telly watching fans under her belt, her attempt at appealing to the rock audience hasn't worked.

'O Lucky Man' Alan Price. Warner

The music from the film, 'O Lucky Man' starring Malcolm McDowell of 'If' and 'Clockwork Orange' fame. Alan Price composed, sang, played keyboards, arranged and produced the whole thing. It's interesting to note that all those I've spoken to who have seen the film want to buy the L.P - it works both ways - listening to the music makes me want to see the film. The lyrics are uncomplicated and

pointed, a refreshing change from the meaningless 'Lord have mercy - Oh yeah' trash that we're expected to tolerate. Three songs worth a special mention are the title track 'O Lucky Man', 'Poor People' and 'Justice'. Price manages to change the keyboard sound on just about all the ten tracks, from plain beautiful piano picking to an empty bar room sound, from jazz solo to full church organ. Result - a renewed admiration for the many talents of Alan Price, remember 'House of the Rising Sun'?

Does anyone buy singles any more? Sales have slumped due to the extortionate ten bob a time, but these are worth listening to.

"Walk on the Wild Side" Lou Reed. R.C.A

A classic single from the L.P 'Transformer' released late last year, produced by David Bowie and Mick Ronson. Lou Reed's gently satirical lyrics with inspired female backing and a sax solo which doesn't last long enough, come together in achieving a rare sound. If, on hearing it you decide to buy - wait, first listen to the whole Transformer album, and then

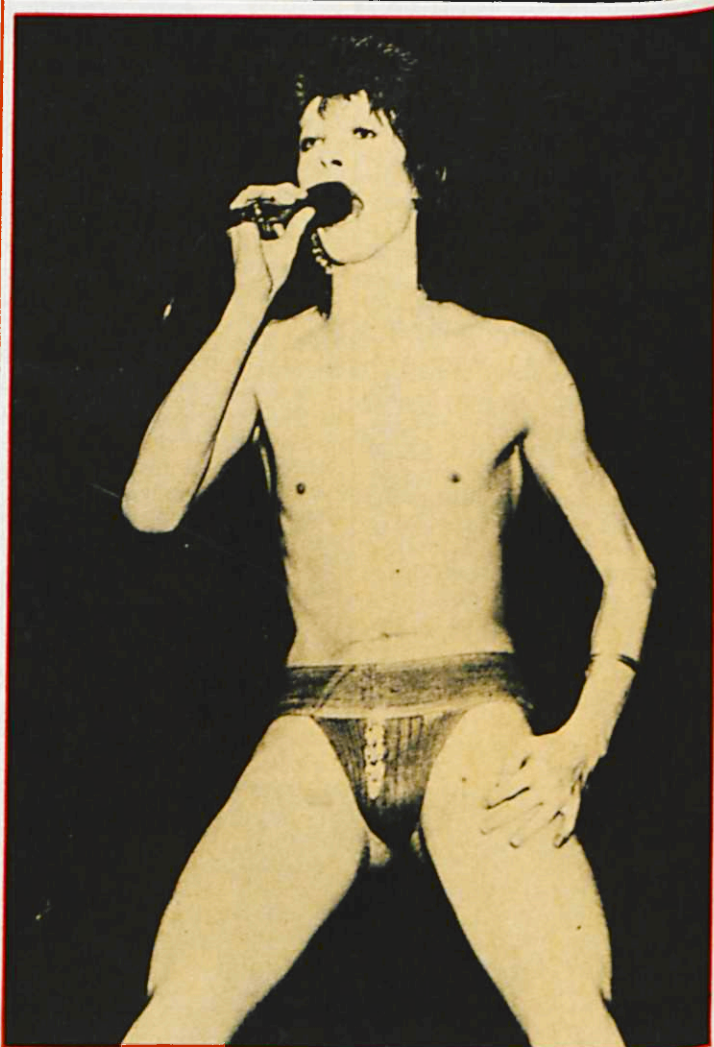
see which you end up with.

"Polk Salad Annie" Elvis Presley. R.C.A

A live description by the King, of the difference between polk salad, turnip greens, and a lady called Annie, all of whom spring from the American South. All the Presley ingredients: applause, screams, spot on timing, shoo be doo ladies and a James Stewart accent. Elvis turns this Tony Joe White song into a sound that makes you feel like hopping about however pooped you are.

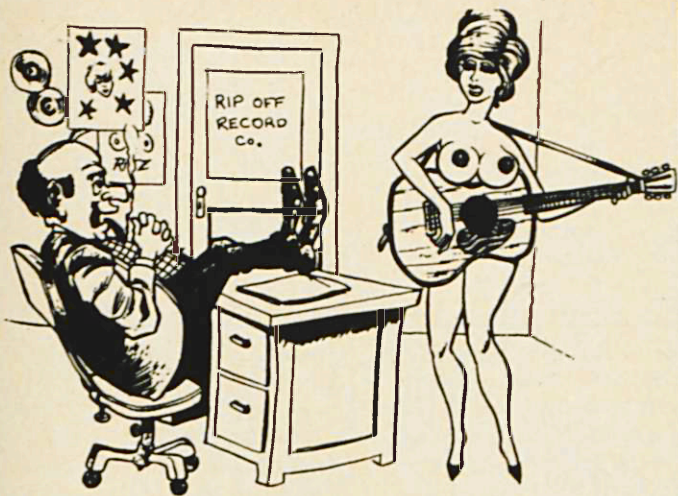
(Oh No! Not) The Beast Day. Marsha Hunt. Vertigo

Says Marsha, "It's a song I sang as a child, I once injected it into a song of my own, but this is exactly how I sang it when I was five years old. Actually black american kids have incredible street songs which they sing and do their own little dance steps to." As in all kids songs there's the repetitive chorus, but add to that the jungly afro drums and reminiscences of 'clap your hands/stamp your feet' and you'll find there's a lot going on in this song which she's back with after two years.



There were 18,000 people at Earls Court on May 12th, thousands of painted faces and David Bowie. Those who couldn't see rushed to the front, stood on chairs or sat on shoulders. It's a new experience to share enthusiasm with people of all ages, even Alan Freeman was up on his chair before the end of the first number. We heard all the best Bowie music and more, whilst he floated, gyrated, leaped and performed each

song into a magical fantasy complete with supernatural outfits. Who can explain the phenomenon of this frail androgynous, who, having barely finished a world tour is now launched on an exhausting British tour and booked to follow that with a 79 date tour of America in about as many days. It is known that he's not at all well, but sadly it seems he's made his choice and opted for a meteoric existence. ■



"You'd go over bigger playing a flute."

OLD MISTRESSES.

The June issue of Spare Rib contained an apology to Therese Schwartz for attributing the research for 'Old Mistresses' to Rosie Parker and an explanation for the misunderstanding. However we've been asked to reprint her letter in full.

Dear Rosie Parker,

I was deeply shocked at what was done to my article on women artists in history and which appeared as "Old Mistresses" with your name as author in the April issue of Spare Rib.

Your letter of January 4 to the Feminist Art Journal specifically asked for permission to reprint my article, called "If De Kooning Is An Old Master, What Is Georgia O'Keefe?", and it was this permission that I gave your representative Karen Durbin when she called me to say that you wanted the article urgently and

ABORTION AND LIBERATION

By Madeleine Simms

in your free copy of New Humanist, other articles include. The Roof Tax by Eva Figes, The Case Against Church Schools by Patricia Knight and Psychiatry and Lies by Ann Dally plus book reviews, new poems, letters, chess & crossword page. Write to:

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had telephoned transatlantic to get my assent.

I told Karen that it was alright to print it, and she assured me that you would pay the usual fee for articles. It was understood that this \$50 fee, which I have received, was for the reprinting of the article only. I did not ask for written assurance, or a contract setting forth my rights (that I own all the material, the usual condition) because I felt that this formality was not necessary between sisters in the feminist movement. But when I saw my ideas and my condensed piece under your name, I was at a loss to understand, and am deeply hurt.

More than that, your action is specifically damaging to me. I do a lot of writing on this subject, have done much research, my work appears regularly in art publications, (see my series in Art in America), and I give lectures on the subject at various colleges around the country. To have my work appear under another name is indeed damaging and hurtful to my future work in this field.

As a feminist publication, I am taking it for granted that you will want to put this matter right. I ask, therefore that you do the following: That you run a short article of explanation and apology and that you print my letter along with it. I am also asking that you do not print this in your letter section because I think that plain justice allows that it appear as a feature in the same manner as my ideas under your name.

I am sure this will be resolved amicably between us, and I expect to hear from you within a week.

Sincerely yours,
Therese Schwartz,
161 W.75 St Apt 9A,
New York, NY 10023

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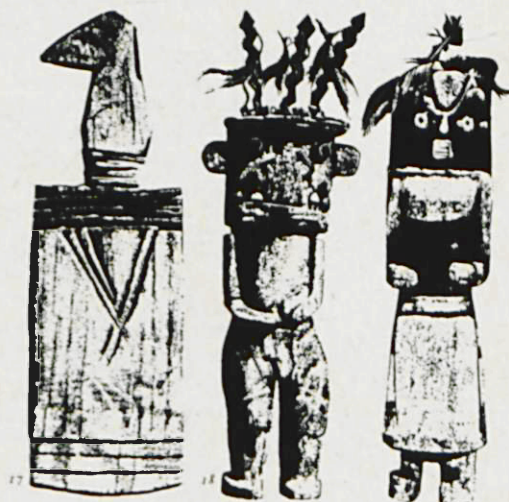
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ELLEN'S DIARY



February 1967

I am sunk in black depression, filled with suicidal thoughts. I've been married for 1½ years now to a man I love and admire passionately. Yet most of the time I feel miserable, tense and neurotic. I can't work out whether it's because of me, or because of him, or simply the difficulties of accommodating oneself to living with someone after being single. Everything seemed so good and full of potential when we met at university. We had the same longings and the same despairs. We loved each other and we wanted to live together, to carve out a niche of sanity together in a mad world and, in doing so, maybe change that world a little. And now? It's all so different. What's happening to him, what's happening to me? Why isn't it working out?

... For once I have felt the need to express some of my thoughts and feelings on paper, though how long this will last I just don't know. I hope it won't take the form of meaningless hysteria when I'm feeling suicidal. Because, periodically, I get into states of depression which border on complete despair. People have suggested to me that this is due to my menstrual syndrome and I am quite ready to believe this. Yesterday afternoon, after a brief visit to the pub, David and I went round to Ted's where we were later joined by Sam. Sam brought round a bottle of wine

and several joints were handed round. There followed several hours of complete, mindless foolery in which time I had to watch all three of them behaving like morons. It is a tragedy that I should have to watch this happen to David. I can see so much potential in him, so much idealism and dynamism, and deep concern. But he has no will power and is beguiled into a continuous rave with the same stale people, night after night.

February later

I'm shattered today. Didn't get much sleep as David and his friends were smoking dope and raving around till the small hours. Our flat is too small: I can't get away from people. I can never be on my own. I wish I liked some of his friends. There are a few women who come round with them, but they never say much, never let on what they are thinking, no more than I do to them. I don't seem to have any friends any more.

February end

Sometimes I really despair of him and just want to get up and go and relinquish the bond completely, leading my own life independent of him, instead of attempting to tolerate this suffocating atmosphere. But I'm too bound to him emotionally. My love for him makes me feel weak and above all I know he needs me.

I often think that if, and when, I have a child, things will be different. I don't know why. I suppose a lot of women are motivated in the same way and are lead to see ultimately that this can often make matters worse.

March

Ted came round half an hour ago. Why are people so dependent? Why must they live in each other's pockets? David and Ted were obviously irritated that I didn't want to come with them. Perhaps this continual need for other people around them is another form of escapism, a

method of avoiding facing up to themselves. When they'd gone, I sat and listened to some Mozart. Beautiful, serene music, I felt elevated and exhilarated being simply on my own with it. Perhaps this is why I don't really fit into the group. I suppose I spend most of my days completely on my own and I'm quite content and happy.

Wondering about having a baby. The idea excites me a lot, I don't know why. I suppose it would give me an involvement and a purpose that I don't have at the moment. Perhaps if I had a baby to think about, I wouldn't worry so much about my relationship with David, and we'd be forced to get a bigger place somewhere away from the centre of London. David likes kids and gets on well with them.

May

Went to the doctor today and it's true, what I'd suspected. I'm pregnant. I feel great, though just a little apprehensive. Everyone seems very pleased and David was extra loving and nice and bought me a double whisky to celebrate. We sat in the pub fantasising about what he/she would look like and we felt very close.

May later

Sometimes I feel David doesn't care a damn. Other times I feel he is completely unaware of the happiness we can be having, believing that he would be far happier if he could screw a different dolly every night. And this weekend my feelings that I've got myself the wrong man have been building up to bursting point. David's complete obsession with hippies and their crude 'love' ideas, it's all so exterior, their flamboyant clothes and talking. He is so dazzled by exterior things, and seems to be so selfishly unaware of real feelings, real love, amongst people he is close to.

God, what will I do when this child comes. Be placed in a doubly inferior position, I suppose, while

David spends his evenings raving and getting drunk and resenting his wife and baby and house. What a great indulgence and self pity this is, but I'd go mad if I didn't write it down. To him I'm just like a piece of old furniture, to be used because there's nothing else around.

September

We've started looking for a house. It's a tedious chore. We saw several today, but none of them were quite right, either not in the right place, or too big or too small, or too expensive or too dilapidated. I hope we find somewhere before the baby is born. Pregnancy is nice at the moment. I love feeling and watching the baby kick and move about inside me.

December

Katie was born two weeks ago, and the moment I saw her, tiny, exquisite and perfect, all my anxieties about her birth, all my worries about my relationship with David and my sense of my own worth disappeared in a flash. I felt on top of the world, utterly fulfilled, radiant with happiness. I dote on her. She's beautiful and she's mine.

February, 1968

We finally bought a new house, after much searching. It's in North London and we moved in last week. I feel quite good now, it's great planning the house, especially with Katie breathing her lovely presence through it. I'm incredibly busy and David is teaching part-time and spending the rest of the time working for a radical newspaper. It's exhausting being a mother. I don't get much sleep and there are endless chores to do and nappies to wash, in addition to Katie's feeds, though I enjoy them a lot.

March

God, I feel exhausted. Katie's been crying and crying all day long, and she's still crying now. It makes me feel frantic, I end up crying myself because I don't

know what to do.

April

The days are slipping by. Katie is getting bigger and bigger every day and spring is coming. I'm beginning to look forward to people coming to see us now. Most of our friends aren't used to babies and are consequently very curious about Katie. It makes me feel good to be able to talk to them about her with assurance, feeling that they want to know. It seems to be opening up the possibility of new levels of communicating with them. I feel they want to know a bit more about me and I want to know more about them. I feel pretty out of contact with things really, since David and I don't go out much together. There's a problem with baby sitters and I usually feel too tired anyway.

April end

David stayed out all night and I couldn't sleep. He came in at 7am looking shattered and went straight to bed. Shit, I suppose he's got a right to be an independent human being, but I feel so miserable and lonely when he doesn't come back and I'm here on my own with Katie. The trouble is, I haven't got much of a case against him because I don't want to stay out myself. But I don't see why he should sleep all day while I do the baby. I told him when he got up and he accused me of being a neurotic, nagging wife.

June

Recently David and some of his friends have started a political group which meets at our house. Intellectually and emotionally I have a lot of sympathy for what they are doing and I'd like to be more involved. I'm doing a lot of paper work for them and answering phone calls which not only does my conscience good, but makes the outside world seem more accessible.

January 1969

I haven't written anything here for ages because there hasn't been

much to say. Life has continued in the same pattern for months: baby minding, shopping, cooking, cleaning and boredom. The political thing folded up a while ago, so I don't have that weekly session to look forward to any longer. I have to admit to feeling very dissatisfied. I'm still very involved with Katie, she is a continual source of novelty and delight. But I'm sick of being at home all day long while David is involved in a whole world that I know nothing about, and I'm fed up with washing nappies and cleaning the kitchen floor. I feel as though I'm putting a whole lot of pent up energy into it which should be directed elsewhere, particularly as it gives me very little sense of satisfaction. Yet I waste time that I could be using productively. When I've finished all the chores and Katie is asleep I sit for ages doing nothing, thinking nothing, my mind drifting from this to that. I've got a lovely child, but I'm far from happy. I feel as though I'm wasting myself and the years are slipping by. But what can I do? I've lost all the drive and ambition I once had. I had plenty of drive at school and university. I felt involved in my studies, I wanted to understand everything, to be politically involved, to relate to a wide circle of people, to travel all over the world. And I did do all those things a little bit. When I got married they all stopped.

My life is continually crowded out with people and situations that I don't want, suffocating me to the extent that I want to scream. I've ceased to read, to think, to listen to music, to have intelligent, serious conversations with people. My frustrations arising from things that have been forced upon me, reduced me to a continuous anxiety state.

Something's got to happen. I can't live the rest of my life like this. There must be an explosion soon. ■





starlet starlet on the screen
who will follow norma jean?

who do you have to fuck
to get into this picture?
who do you have to lay
to make your way?
hooray for hollywood
what do you have to do
to prove your worth?
who do you have to know
to stay on earth?

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